

**A celebration of  
the 90<sup>th</sup> birthday of  
Emilia Hramov**

**with a**

**luncheon at  
Whitney Center  
on March 22, 2014**

**and a**

**collection of  
remembrances**

The names of people who have planned to attend the luncheon in honor of Emilia Hramov are listed below.

Neela Banerjee	Joyce Morral & Peter Nuelsen
Vasily Bessonoff	Constantine Muravnik
Helen & Constantine Bezas	Jeanne B. Musto
Rosemary Courtney	Gina Novick & Shelly Kagan
Kathy & Eric Denardo	Maria & Dexter Peavy
Irina Dolgova	Jamie, Anders & Leif Pedersen
Kristina Robb Dover	Jean Petrov
Mr. & Mrs. Dutkanicz	Matthew C. Regan
Paul Giatis & Joy Paschalidis	Ben Rifkin
Renée Glassner	Sophia Salinger
Susan & Douglas Hawthorne	Remy Shaber
Lucas Hernandez	Tatiana Soltan
Cynthia & Geoffrey Hecht	Maura & Thomas Stavovy
Harald Hille	Margaret Tirs & James O'Neill
Susan Israel	Julia Titus
Tina Kelley	Tanya & Tomas Venclova
Ann & Father George Lardas	Andrew Warth
Kathryn & Earle Leinhardt	Nancy Weissman
Anna & Marc Pierre Mandel	Inna Golub & Walter Wolog
Karin & Peter Morin	Olga & Bill Zebb

The following pages contain remembrances of some of Emilia Hramov's many friends and photos of the event.

## The Guest of Honor



From Vladimir Alexandrov

Dear Mrs. Hramov,

I write on behalf of the Slavic Department to congratulate you on the occasion of your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Those of us who were privileged to know you when you were still teaching remember your tireless devotion to your students, to Russian culture, and to the Department. You remain an inspiration to your colleagues and to the generations of students who benefited from your dedication, generosity, and friendship.

I wish you all the best on this special day, and Многая лета!

Vladimir E. Alexandrov

B. E. Bensinger Professor of Slavic  
Languages and Literatures

Acting Chair, Slavic Department

From George P. Burnside

Dear Emilia Pavlovna!

Once again I would like to express my thanks to you and also to your dear late husband, Konstantin Dmitrievich, for all you did to train us Russian students at Yale. It is in no small part thanks to you that I continue to use my Russian as an interpreter/translator. In addition to the fine teaching you provided, the warmth of your and Konstantin Dmitrievich's personalities created a feeling of family for us students: you were like an aunt and uncle to us. Classes in the basement, with its literary and political associations, all the more during the Cold War, made us feel like we were living Russian history, not to mention the fact that among our teachers, besides you, there were people like Riurik Dudin and Tomas Venclova, who had actively resisted the communist regime. Studying Russian at Yale was an unforgettable experience.

In addition, I would like to thank you for your kind and enthusiastic support of the Yale Russian Chorus for so many years (both before and after me as well; I was at Yale from 1978 to 1984). One picture I have in my mind is seeing you and Konstantin Dmitrievich in the front row of Woolsey Hall at every concert we gave there.

I am delighted to join your friends, former students and colleagues in wishing you a Happy 90th Birthday!

Many thanks again, and best wishes,

Gregory P. Burnside, B.A., Silliman 1982

From Ed and Sylvia Davis

Dear Emilia,

This note is written from our home in Kure Beach, North Carolina. We are deeply sorry that we will not be able to attend the celebration of your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

What a beautiful, extraordinary and remarkable lady you are! We will remember your gentle, kind and graceful manner, the stories you shared, and your ZEST for life! We feel blessed that our paths crossed on this life's journey.

Fondly,

Ed and Sylvia Davis

From Kathy and Eric Denardo

Dear Emilia,

You and your late husband bought the house next door long ago, and we thought to write this note from the perspective of neighbors who are good friends.

On Halloween, each family in our neighborhood would dole out candy, but you would do more. You would engage each child in a conversation that was of interest to that person. Also, almost without exception, during Yale reunion weekends, former students would visit your home and spend an hour or an afternoon deep in conversation with you on your porch. More recently, several of your former students told us that 21 Carmalt Road had been their "home away from home."

Each of us has been touched by your gentle manner, your concern for our wellbeing, your insight, and your intelligence. You have meant a great deal to many people, and you always will.

With deep affection,

Kathy and Eric Denardo

From Kristina Robb Dover

Dear Emilia Pavlovna,

You were my first-year Russian teacher. Somehow, you taught me to love Russian. In hindsight, I think it was not so much the Russian language but you with whom I fell in love – the evidence of which was a major in Russian and East European Studies.

There have been so many things to love over the 20 some years we've been friends. You are, in some ways, a second mother. But our care for one another all really started with your care for me after an early first-year Russian test. I was nursing a wounded ego after my first-ever "D" on a test in the Russian alphabet. (We Yalies didn't get into college, after all, by regularly earning D's.) But I had sought you out for answers, and you assiduously and energetically (as was your way) walked me through the slew of red marks on my paper with your usual mix of cheerful equanimity and dogged determination to make me a successful Russian student, finally sending me off one hour later with clear instructions: "You must study, study, study." You assured me that if I stuck with it I'd soon be earning A's. (You were right, as you often are.)

Those "bright college years" were marked by frequent interactions with you over dinner at the Russian table, where you faithfully showed up every week to bear the awkward, stilted Russian of eager students, patiently repeating for them the correct grammatical construction with almost the same motherly dedication to each carefully enunciated word that you paid to each of you students.

When upon graduation from Yale I found myself rather miserably not in the ranks of most of my cohorts, who by and large had followed one of three paths (investment banking, medical school or law school), you quite literally took me in. Your husband Mr. Hramov had just died and you were alone – but you had a spare bedroom. "Well, look," you said, matter-of-factly. "Mr. Hramov isn't here anymore, and I could use the company." I had landed a summer research job with Paul Kennedy and every morning would take the bus in to work from your house in Hamden.

Living together for a summer is when we became more like family. For one, you refused to let me pay rent. You insisted on stacking the fridge with every manner of frozen dinner; every morning you would make me a

lunch, despite my vigorous protests. This was when I came to learn the importance of food for a woman who had grown up in Europe during World War II. Food was one embodiment of your love for me.

The other was your advice. You have never been without it. Somehow you deliver it in such an endearing way that I can rarely begrudge you for it. Over the years I've come to know you and what you value from the advice you've given: about the importance of hard work and being a devoted mother to my two children; about being a wife who listens (at least a bit) to and respects her husband; about the priority of family over career.

That summer you helped me secure my very first real job. You knew I wanted to work in the news business (maybe not unlike what you did working for *The New York Times* in New York before meeting and marrying Mr. Hramov who soon after insisted you quit your New York – New Haven commute); so you called up an old student of yours working at ABC News to tell him I was applying for a job with the John Stossel Unit at 20/20. Not long after, I was moving my suitcases into an itty-bitty apartment just a few blocks away from Lincoln Center.

You were at my wedding. You were at my graduation from Princeton Seminary years later. For me, like for so many of your students who stayed in touch over the years, you've always been just a phone call away, quickly and eagerly engaged in the details of our lives, and always insisting that the tab for the call be on you.

Few things tell as much about a person as growing old, which I suspect is as much about learning to let go in loss over and over again. I've had the privilege of watching you do this gracefully, without complaint, with the same cheerful equanimity and vivacious curiosity that you brought to early morning Russian class all those years. A knee surgery and ensuing near-death infection, chronic pain from a bad back, the loss of your independence, including the home you lived in for many years with Mr. Hramov. You've met the ravages of old age with matter-of-fact acceptance that with every loss or mini death of sorts in this life, there comes a new beginning. New life is always just around the corner.

This wisdom and *joie de vivre* are gifts that you have imparted to me. I find myself appropriating them when I tell my son in his weekly basketball



games to play with heart no matter the outcome. Or when I hold my 4-year-old daughter close at the end of a long day, remembering that this moment is precious and passing away.

Emilia Pavlovna, on your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, you can celebrate a life well lived. A life that has loved and played – and for sure “studied, studied, studied” – hard. A life lived out in the company of friends, students, neighbors and the church. What more can one say about someone so beloved? “Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday,” maybe. And “I love and admire you.”

Kristina Robb Dover

From Ruta Grandell

Dear Emily,

Yes, I do know that your given name is Emilia. But we met in New York through Gaujmaliete, a Latvian sorority, and a sorority in Latvia is a lifelong association that just begins at school. “Once a Gaujmaliete, always a Gaujmaliete,” is our motto. Within our sorority, you always have been ‘Emily,’ and it would be strange to refer to you in any other way.

Warmest and fondest wishes to you, Emily, on your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. I remember well our meetings in New York, both of the sorority and of our own at the Yale Club.

Happy memories! Happy Birthday!

Daudz Laimes Dzimšanas Dienā!

Ruta Grandell

From Susan and Doug Hawthorne

Dear Mrs. Hramov,

While it's hard to know what to say about the almost 30 years we have known you, at least we know where to start: September 1985 when we moved into our house at 47 Carmalt Road, and you and Mr. Hramov were probably the first neighbors we met. And what wonderful neighbors you were. When we arrived on Carmalt Road our two older children, Carrie and Ben, were almost 4 and about 2 and a half and the third, Leslie, made her appearance during that first month. Chris, our adopted fourth child, moved in in January 1997. Your interest in and concern for our children was amazing – there was always special Halloween treats (just for them!) and Christmas never passed without gifts for all of us. We still talk about Mr. Hramov's particular worry when the kids were learning to rollerskate that they might injure themselves – in particular hit their heads; he was adamant that they should be wearing helmets. And as usual, he was right! – happily, though, the children escaped injury even without helmets. Your care of our family did not stop with the human inhabitants either, since you cared for our cats (you may remember Oliver in particular) on countless occasions when we were out of town. It is probably fair to say that vacations would have been impossible (or definitely more of a hassle) without you coming to our aid to be the designated cat-sitter.

So many memories have been accumulated over the almost 30 years – too many to list – but we couldn't let the opportunity pass without recalling the time in 1996 when you gave us a crash course in Russian. We had the great good fortune to accompany a Yale alumni trip to Russia (Alex Schenker was the faculty member on the trip) and at our request you attempted to teach us a little Russian. For about two months we would meet with you once or twice a week; and while we did pick up an incredible amount of Russian during that short period of time, we fear we were a bit of a disappointment to you as students. In our defense, unlike the Yale students who were the standard of comparison, we had full-time jobs and a large family to distract us from our studies. You did soften the blow a bit, though, by telling us about one favorite student of yours who quit the first time she tried to take Russian because she just couldn't produce the correct pronunciation but who succeeded the second time she

tried and ultimately became quite proficient. How lucky we were to have a prize-winning Yale instructor as a neighbor, willing to provide private teaching.

We wish you the very best on the occasion of your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. What a life you have had and how fortunate for us to have become your neighbors and even more significantly, your friends. We do miss having you on the street.

So from all the Hawthornes: Happy Birthday!

Doug and Susie Hawthorne

(joined by Carrie, Ben, Leslie, and Chris)

## Guests - Part I

Father George Lardas



Tatiana Soltan



Lucas Hernandez



Constantine Muravnik



## Guests - Part I

Jamie, Leif and Anders Pedersen



Matthew Regan

Vasily Bessonoff



## Guests - Part I

Olga and Bill Zebb



Jean Petrov



Kathryn Leinhardt



Rosemary Courtney



## Guests- Part I

Geoff and Cindi Hecht



Andrew Warth



Kristina Robb Dover



Julia Titus



## Guests - Part I

Renée Glassner



Jeanne Musto



Susan Israel

Gina Novick & Shelly Kagan





From Harald Hille

Dear Emilia,

It gives me great pleasure to know that a pillar of the Yale Russian Department, where I was both a student and instructor in the 1960s, is approaching four score and ten in years, which surely marks the onset of venerability, a University treasure!

Part of the secret of Emilia Pavlovna Hramova's longevity is her sparkle and charm, as well as a deep-set reasonableness in her approach to situations and people.

Konstantin Dmitrievich, her late husband, was one of my direct mentors as a teacher. He, like Emilia Pavlovna, was a deeply kind and generous person, who went out of his way to help American students master the Russian language, which he had acquired effortlessly as a child, but there was an undercurrent of unpredictability in him that made us all a bit careful in dealing with him.

Emilia Pavlovna would smile at her students in a motherly way and cheerfully assure us that Russian declensions were nothing to worry about, that reading Pushkin and Turgenev was fun and rewarding, and that we should button up our overcoats when we left class. Her students loved her, and still do. She has kept up contact with them, years after she knew them at Yale. Fellow teachers sang her praises for her many kindnesses. She has been a loyal fan of the Yale Russian Chorus despite our mispronunciation of those beautiful words. And the fellows at Davenport College miss her at lunches and meetings.

Emilia Pavlovna, you made a difference in our lives and in other people's lives and we wish you Mnogaya lyeta! Many years!

With much respect and appreciation,

'Karl Einarovich' Harald Hille

From Nathan Hunt

Dear Emilia Pavlovna,

You were a meticulous teacher, a beacon of hard work and discipline, and, most importantly, a true friend to the countless beloved students you took under your wing. You and your devoted husband Konstantin Dmitrievich did more than impart knowledge of the Russian language – you taught life, critical thinking, and commitment. The two of you taught commitment to learning and commitment to family via the students who formed your extended family – and you inspired us through the glowing example of your own deep commitment to each other.

As a teacher Emilia Pavlovna was a mother to me and to many of her students. I craved her love and approval as I might from my own mother, a fact which probably made me a more diligent student. The Language Lab (“LINGAFONNY KABINET”) was an essential but voluntary tool to teach proper pronunciation. I’m sure I would have visited less often if I weren’t so warmly rewarded by Mrs. Hramov with an “OCHEN’ KHOROSHO!” every time I produced a punchcard evidencing my visit at the start of class. I also remember the pride I felt when Mrs. Hramov praised me loudly in front of the class for using a grammatical form that we had not yet studied, though my answer was in fact nothing more than a lucky guess. I guess now at age 90 she should finally know the truth ... .

Who can forget the loving spectacle of “Grandmother Boa Constrictor” she staged every year with the first-year students? The opening lines of the drama (“ZDRAVSTVUIITE DOROGAYA BABUSHKA”) seem now to have been more directed to her than to the audience. She was as loving a grandmother as one could hope for in the otherwise dreary confines of the HGS “dungeon” we studied in!

Her maternal instincts extended far beyond the classroom. She and Konstantin Dmitrievich routinely invited students to their home in Hamden both for dinners and for lodging if necessary – my wife and I stayed with them on numerous occasions, especially during reunions. Like any good mother, she was stern when necessary – even in matters not related to studies. One night during my 10<sup>th</sup> reunion I arrived home well after 2:00 a.m. in a state of rather advanced inebriation – and was promptly reminded that we had agreed to go to church early the next morning. My

conscience overcame my headache and I attended the service. To this day I remember it as the longest and most challenging liturgy in my life – as luck would have it, it was a 3-hour marathon service with a 30-minute add-on for Pentecost!

I was surprised to learn that in spite of her extensive knowledge of Russian and excellent pedagogical skills, Emilia Pavlovna never actually lived in the Soviet Union after her first birthday. So it was with great excitement that my wife and I greeted her in 1999 when she visited Russia on a tour to see the country she had taught for so many decades. She stayed at the Ukraine Hotel (it was a far cry from the luxurious abode it is today) and spent 10 days gleefully soaking up the sites and atmosphere with as much enthusiasm as the other tourists in her group. I thought it ironic that my wife and I knew more about actual day-to-day life in Russia than the maestro who had for years guided our study of the country at Yale.

I plucked my wife out of the Soviet Union back in 1987, before it was fashionable to do so. There were so few immigrants then that the American Consul sat down with us and personally filled out my wife's immigration forms! And when I returned for my final semester at Yale with wife in tow, Emilia Pavlovna more than anyone welcomed her and ensured that she would never be alone during her first 5 months on this side of the iron curtain. Konstantin Dmitrievich and Emilia Pavlovna doted on my new bride, inviting her to events, performances, their home, and of course to the Russian Table, where they held court every Wednesday in Davenport College.

Many members of my family have had the pleasure of meeting Emilia Pavlovna including my mother ("stately" is the word Mom used to describe her), my brother ("feisty" was his word) and most importantly my son and daughter. While neither of them matriculated at Yale, both have spent afternoons or evenings visiting with Emilia Pavlovna on her living room sofa, soaking up her love and wisdom. Mrs. Hramov does not make "small talk" in such cases – if she has the attention of a young man or woman for a short period, she will make good use of the time. My children heard her discourse on life, perseverance and, inevitably, the importance of conscientious study. And I hope they were listening!

I am not an old man, but for what it's worth, Emilia Pavlovna had a profound and lasting impact on my life. Hundreds of others can say the same.

Nathan Hunt

From Daria Kirjanov-Mueller

Dear Emilia Pavlovna,

One wintery day in January I walked up to my front door and found a solid chocolate Santa Claus nestled between the storm and front doors. It was the beginning of the Russian Christmas season and I knew that you had driven to my home, walked along the poorly shoveled walk in your chestnut brown fur hat and matching fur coat, holding the very special gift, and knocked upon my door with no answer. I can visualize you as you shrugged in that “Nu, chto delat’ ?” manner, bent down in your shimmering mink and placed the chocolate Father Frost delicately between the doors. Of course, we were delighted with this gift each and every year, as were dozens of recent and not so recent Yale graduates and former students around the country, as they received their Christmas parcels in the mail. And then there was Easter and the bunnies – the same stealthy approach to the front door, the same delicious confection, the same coat. And it was the same every year, since my son was born, and I know that our home was one of many to be visited by your boundless generosity. We will be traveling on the 22<sup>nd</sup>, but will be with you in spirit, as this birthday photo attests.



So many memories come to me since 1991 when my friendship with Emilia Pavlovna began. I felt much in common with her, because she and both our parents had lived in WWII DP camps in Europe and came from families who resisted communism in Russia. It all began when she trained me as one of her Russian Teaching Assistants in the Yale Slavic Department. And it has been her inspiration and complete dedication to teaching Russian that always moved me deeply and kept the flame in me going. Over those 20 years of teaching in different states and institutions I would from time to time have to produce visualizations for myself to keep my pedagogical form in good shape. And it was usually something about Emilia Pavlovna that helped me through – the constant flow of genuine delight in everything happening in the classroom; her sense of love for her language and culture; her ability to create a feeling of family in the classroom; the unfailing dignity of her person in the face of all that life brings; and the alarming look of disapproval on her face when being addressed, even if only due to a tiny slip in vigilance, with the informal “ty” or with an imperative in the “ty” form (no, I will try never to do this with elders!). I would meditate on these things often.

And so many of the best times my family and I spent with her were over the past 15 years or so. As neighbors we visited with her on Carmalt

Road. We would bring our children's choir to her house (and, later, to Whitney Center) for Christmas caroling and even for singing Easter hymns. Of course, there were chocolate Santas for us and enough for twice as many more. We would meet up at annual Slavic Department's events together. On several occasions, there were unplanned meetings in the fruit section at Stop and Shop where long conversations would take place. We would occasionally drive to church together for a holiday or a regular service. Just this past Christmas, on January 7, I appeared at the service in Stratford and Emilia Pavlovna was already there (*nu, konechno!*) ; a parishioner had driven her, saying, "It just would not be Russian Christmas without Mrs. Hramov." This fall we attended the alumnae concert of the Yale Russian Chorus together, and, at the end of the concert, several singers and former students descended upon her with so much affection. Just recently Emilia came to hear the winners of the local children's piano competition, of whom my son was one, and we sat together for lunch in the café, listening to her reminiscences about living in Latvia between the wars, before 1939 when the course of her life changed radically. And she remembered how she also played the piano as a child. And then she started to recall in such detail her youth in Europe, and I wanted to keep sitting there and keep that narrative going. And now I want to hear more about her life and to take the time to visit with her and let her tell me these stories, so dear to her heart. I encourage all her friends to find time to sit with her and listen to her as she tells these stories of her life. It is precious.

And now I look back and realize that those days teaching in the Slavic Department with her were golden years for me and the beginning of a life-long calling. And I realize that many many students like myself had their own beginnings with Emilia Pavlovna. I was somewhere in the middle of perhaps hundreds that she had taught and developed friendships with and to whom she was already sending chocolate Grandfather Frosts and Bunnies. Happy 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday, dear Emilia Pavlovna. And thank you for your love, and friendship, and faith in me.

With deep affection and respect,

Daria Kirjanov-Mueller

From Ann Lardas

Dear Mrs. Hramov,

Your grace and good humor have been a huge help to me in undertaking the conducting of our church choir. You have given me music, advice, and help with my pronunciation. You have also helped me to have perspective.

Your love for life and all that it embraces can be summed up an observation you made when I went to your house to get music. There was a beautiful rabbit outside, nibbling on your front lawn, and you commented that you do not use pesticides on your lawn because you would rather have the rabbit around. He was a peaceful creature, and watching him made me feel calmer, also. I salute your choice, and your rationale, and your world view. When you arrive at church for a service, I feel that NOW we are truly celebrating the feast.

Ann Lardas

From Anna Mandel

Dear Emilia Pavlovna,

I wish you a very happy 90th birthday! You are, and always will be, an inspiration to me. I keep in my heart the Wednesdays we spent at Russian Table, the times I visited you in your home, the discussions we had about Russian language and literature, history, family, career, and life in general. I wish you all of the best and much more, and keep you in my heart always. I hope you enjoy this photo taken in May 2007 as much as I do.

*Love,*

Anna Mandel





From Karin Morin

Proverbs 19:22 – “What is desirable in a person is kindness.”

Dear Emilia,

You have embodied kindness since the day I met you as a seventeen-year-old freshman at Yale.

The first day I came to work in the Slavic Department – it was still September – you asked me whether I would like coffee or tea to drink. Tongue-tied, I managed to stutter out that I didn’t like either.

“What do you like to drink?” you then asked.

“Cocoa,” I said.

The next day a large tub of cocoa mix appeared in the office, never to go empty throughout my four years at work in the basement of HGS.

Of course, the tub of cocoa was only the first of many instances of kindness toward me. As a sophomore, I encountered a particularly difficult personal situation. You uncritically embraced me, both physically and metaphorically, in my moment of great need. That expression sounds melodramatic, but for a teenager alienated from her parents, it was nothing short of miraculous to receive your uncritical support. Once again you showed me what it meant to be an extraordinarily kind woman.

Throughout the many years since, your kind heart has embraced me. You and Mr. Hramov took me into your home briefly during the summer following my graduation. You came to my wedding. I might add, even though you were a little suspicious of the wisdom of my choice of a husband, although I believe you came to love him for his own sake later on. You welcomed each of my children with joy. You generously took my two daughters and my oldest son on wonder-filled weekend excursions to New York. You have remained attentive to their many adventures as they have grown to adulthood.

As long as you were able, you welcomed visits from any member of the family, and even my children’s friends, when they were teens and would not visit happily without a buddy. Everyone who came through the door at 21 Carmalt Road was greeted with a smile, kind attention, and

inevitably something sweet. No one has ever left your presence hungry!  
“Mrs. Hramov’s meals” remain proverbial in our household.

Now my children are old enough to visit on their own, and do when their busy young lives permit. I hope they have learned a little about kindness from the best of examples, that set by my beloved friend, Emilia Hramov.

Karin Morin

## Guests - Part II

Sophia Salinger,  
Walter Wolog & Inna Golub



Ben Rifkin



Neela Banerjee



Tina Kelley



## Guests - Part II

Maura Stavovy



Jim O'Neill & Margaret Tirs O'Neill



Harald Hille, Kathy & Eric Denardo



Remy Shaber



## Guests - Part II

Susie and Doug Hawthorne



Nancy Weissman



Peter and Karin Morin



Anna & Marc Pierre Mandel



## Guest - Part II

Maria Peavy



Dexter Peavy



with Irina Dolgova



## Guests - Part II

Mrs. Dutkanicz



Mr. Dutkanicz



Peter Nuelsen and Joyce Morral, with Susie Hawthorne



From Jeanne Musto

Dear Emilia,

You and your late husband frequently attended Davenport College Fellows' gatherings, as did my late husband and I, and we became acquainted there. My daughter-in-law Kathryn (Katie) Beals took a class from you and, as you were always solicitous of your students, you took an interest in Katie and her romantic relationship with our son David.

For several years my husband & I held Christmas Day evening "sing-alongs" of Christmas carols at our home for our extended family and a few close family friends. You became part of those gatherings. You brought Russian carols and, with characteristic fortitude and determination, taught us how to pronounce the words and explained what they meant. As a member of the Friends of Grove St. Cemetery, you exhibited the same fortitude while leading visitors through the cemetery no matter what the weather was up to. It does not surprise me that you are still going strong at the age of 90.

Jeanne Musto



From James O'Neill

Dear Emilia,

Happy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Before I first came to Hamden with Mika to visit you, I had heard that you had just gotten out of the hospital after knee replacement surgery followed by cellulitis and a life-threatening complication. While at your house for the first time, sitting in your living room, I took a peek into the kitchen. I was shocked to see you standing on top of a tall stool straining to retrieve something or other from the uppermost cabinets near the ceiling. "This lady was near death a week ago and now she is scaling Mount Everest," I thought - "as fearless as a Sherpa."

Later, you took Mika and me on a tour of Yale University. With your boundless energy we seemed to go everywhere even to the point of conducting a few random jaywalks. Like Moses, you used the tapping of your staff to part the sea of cars, albeit not all of them red, and caused many of the drivers to have brakes repaired sooner than previously scheduled. By the way, I never did satisfy my curiosity about Skull and Bones and what, exactly, George Bush did in there that was so mysterious, but we'll just have to set that aside for a future trip.

After the Yale tour, you offered to give us a guided tour of the adjacent Cemetery at which you are a docent. At that point Mika and I, who, by that time, were very happy that we were not arriving at the cemetery horizontally, declined. You had worn us out.

I have always enjoyed talking to you or just listening to you and Mika chatter in what I will call "Anglo-Russian Pidgin". It is a language in which one expresses partial thoughts in either English or Russian, frequently mixing the languages within a sentence or a phrase, in a way that gets the entire thought across efficiently. My four years of Latin are wasted in such environments.

We love you very much and wish you sunshine in the in the times ahead.

Jim O'Neill (Mika's Irish Husband)

From Maija Paegle

Hello dear Emilia!

Happy birthday!

I hope that your birthday is a day that shows you how beloved you are and how much you mean to all of us. I am so very sorry that I will not be able to be with you on that very special day, but want you to know that I will be there in spirit.

I was so very fortunate to get to know you when I moved to New York from Lincoln Nebraska after finishing college in 1968. We are both members of the Latvian Sorority, Gaujmalietes. One of my fondest memories is visiting with you during our annual Christmas lunches at the United Nations. Your smiles, your easy laughter, and your enjoyment of life, always made me feel good about the world and myself. That was one of my best Christmas gifts.

My dear sister, Dagmara, who you met, died last summer while we were in Latvia for a visit. I am still working on her papers, writings, etc. But I have not given up on visiting you one day, maybe in the fall.

As you know, all of our Gaujmaliete members are getting older. We have not been able to get together. However, I know that all of us join in to wish you a terrific birthday and year!

With many, many hugs,

Maija Paegle

# Groups



# Groups



# Everyone



From Jamie Pedersen

Dear Mrs. Hramov,

I have so many memories that it's hard to pick out one. You introduced me to Russian - and to Russia - and you changed the course of my life. About two months into my freshman year, you kept me after class and asked me why I was getting A minuses on my tests. "You should be getting A's," you exclaimed. And so I redoubled my efforts and did. An American Studies major from my freshman year, I took intensive Russian and Russian history as a sophomore and continued to visit and talk with you and your husband in the HGS basement. At your urging, I read Pushkin, Lermontov, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky in the original. You and your husband invited me to your church in Stratford and introduced me to bliny at Maslenitsa (my first Orthodox service and my first taste of caviar!)

Largely at your urging, I spent a junior term abroad in Leningrad, which led to my joining the Yale Russian Chorus and then spending the year after college graduation in Moscow, and the summer after my first year in law school in Kiev. In 1999, I crossed paths with you when you made your first trip to St. Petersburg. And for nearly 30 years, you have been a dear friend. I congratulate you on your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday!

I look forward to introducing two of my sons, Leif and Anders, to you at your birthday party and to joining a chorus of "Mnogaya leta" (Many years).

Jamie (Pedersen)

From Ben Rifkin

Dear Emilia Pavlovna:

Thank you for changing my life.

When we met, I was a 19-year old sophomore who came to Russian on a lark. I decided I would try Russian on the first day of the fall semester, and Chinese on the second day. But, as it turned out, До китайского я так и не дошел. I fell in love with Russian in your class on that very first day. I had originally come to college intending to major in history and go to law school. By the end of the first month in your class back in 1979, I decided to drop the history major and declare a major in Russian Studies. By the end of the first semester, I had decided to pursue a doctoral degree in Slavic, rather than going to law school.

You changed my life, Emilia Pavlovna. My wife and children cannot be present at your birthday celebration, but they send to you their most profound thanks. Without you, I would never have met my wife, Lisa, while we were both in graduate school at the University of Michigan. And had I never met Lisa, my children Nathan and Hannah would simply never have been.

How did it all happen? You and Konstantin Dmitrievich showered all your students not only with the intellectual challenge of studying this extraordinarily beautiful language, but you also showered us with your affection and encouragement. You not only taught me Russian, you taught me that I had talent for Russian. You returned my homework assignments and test papers, not only with grades of "A," but with comments, both written and spoken, to tell me that I had talent for the study of Russian, that I could and should pursue this talent.

While a student in the Russian program, I also volunteered at the Ulysses S. Grant Foundation, where I taught center-city New Haven students in grades 6-12 composition. One day, you happened to run in to me while I was taking the students to an art exhibit on campus and you watched me teaching. Later you praised me for how I held their attention and engaged them actively in the learning process. When I showed interest in teaching Russian, you offered me the opportunity to teach a lesson or two in the first-year Russian course. It was that experience that convinced me that I had found my path. I left Yale for a two-year stay in

Moscow, where I worked as a translator, and then ultimately enrolled in graduate school.

After completing my doctoral degree and taking up my first professorial position at UW-Madison, I got back in touch with you and we began to share conversations about teaching. At that time, you were in your late 60s and you were offering me advice and giving suggestions that met not only my own teaching interests and style, but were consistent with the latest approaches to communicative language teaching. I enjoyed our pedagogical conversations enormously and often reflected back on our classroom time together, thinking about Russian at Yale in the early 1980s from the perspective of the proficiency-movement in the 1990s. And I saw why I loved Russian with you and your team.

When students in other language classes at Yale and around the country were mostly talking *about* language, but *in English*, we were coming to class and talking in Russian. What I found so exciting about your class was that it was conducted almost exclusively *in Russian*, even in our first-semester class. When I didn't understand, you taught me not to give up: you taught me to solve language puzzles with all the skills you had given me. And we didn't just go through audio-lingual drills mindlessly repeating you: we had real conversations, and you encouraged us to create with the language and to laugh together as we stumbled through our bilingual and bicultural discoveries.

Years after you retired, you still continued to share with me suggestions for class activities that I continued to find exciting and useful.

In 2002, I was delighted to be serving AATSEEL as President-Elect when you were presented with an award for excellence in teaching at the college level. At the reception at which the award was presented, we sat together and you pointed out the many people in the room who had been your student at one time or another. The room was full of your students: the fact that so many of your students went on to become prominent Slavists speaks volumes about you as a teacher. You also reminisced about each one of those students and even recalled where they sat in the tiny basement classroom in which you taught. This one sat to your left, that one sat to your right. And then you turned to me and remembered that I used to take different seats in the room every class day. It was my effort to



“shake things up” and make people look at the world from different perspectives, even if only for an hour in Russian class. I had completely forgotten about that, but you remembered it – 20 years after I had graduated.

Emilia Pavlovna, you are the most important teacher and mentor in my life. You have inspired me and you are my model of the caring teacher who encourages his or her students. In everything I do as a professor and as a dean, I strive to emulate you. I can never thank you enough for all that you have given me.

Целую и крепко обнимаю Вас!

Ben Rifkin

Davenport '82

From Sophia Salinger

Dear Emilia,

My thoughts of you are closely and fondly linked to memories of my mother, Tatiana Sergievsky, who passed away last October. For approximately four decades, you and she spoke with each other daily, sharing the news and wishing each other good night. You and she also spent nearly every holiday together. These holidays included your dear husbands until they expired.

Accompanying this note is a picture of you and Tatiana at her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday party.

With deep affection,  
Sophia Salinger



From Jeffrey Sammons

Dear Emilia,

I am sorry not to be able to attend your birthday celebration, but I congratulate you on reaching such a round number and wish you many happy returns. You have always been kind and considerate toward me, so I look forward to seeing you in the future, perhaps at Koerner Center events.

With all good wishes,

Jeff Sammons

From Alexander Schenker

Dear Emilia Pavlovna,

In 1969 when I welcomed you as a colleague in teaching, it did not occur to me that three decades later I would be welcoming you as a colleague in retirement and that five decades later I would be greeting you as a colleague-nonagenarian. But here we are limping on together and more power to us!

My power, alas, is wanting at this moment and this is why I doubt very much that I would be in shape to join you and your many friends in your celebratory luncheon, and just in case I can't be with you that day, please accept my and Christina's best wishes for many more birthdays in good health and good cheer. Mnogaia leta, as our well beloved Russian chorus sings so well!

Your friend and admirer,

Alex Schenker

From David Schimmelpennick van der Oye

Dear Emilia Pavlovna,

Good teachers are like parents. They love their students unconditionally. I learned this lesson from you when I was an undergraduate. As a freshman majoring in Russian and East European Studies, I enrolled in the introductory language course during my freshman year in September 1975. It met at 8:30 am, so it was my very first class at Yale. In the windowless room of the Hall of Graduate Studies' basement, you greeted us all and then asked if we knew any Russian words. Being a cocky 18-year-old, I mentioned a noun that is unprintable. It could have been the start of a rocky relationship.

I didn't help matters by probably being one of the least diligent undergraduates that you ever taught. Having gone to an all-boys' school, I spent my freshman and sophomore years paying much more attention to the social life Yale offers than my studies. My transcript shows that I had a lot of fun. Nevertheless, you and Konstantin Dmitrievich were always very kind to me. I later on realized that you were disappointed rather than angry with me. You also sensed that I shared your great love for Russia, and I think that this is why you never gave up hope.

When the dining hall workers went on strike in my sophomore year, you invited me to a lavish Thanksgiving dinner at your home in Hamden. There I learned about Russian hospitality. I was a ravenous 19-year-old and happily worked my way through course after course. I naturally assumed that after the *zakuski*, soup and salad, the fish you served was the main course and greedily devoured an enormous portion of seconds. Having cleaned off my plate, the turkey appeared! I almost had to admit defeat, but struggled on.

I had to leave Yale during my junior year when I contracted a severe case of mononucleosis. The fact that a singing group had just tapped me only made my illness worse. After I got better two years later, I worked for a Toronto investment bank. To return to Yale I had to take some summer courses to prove that I could get good grades, and I therefore enrolled in introductory Spanish in June 1986. I always joined the Russian table in the dining hall and was very relieved that you welcomed me back like a long lost friend rather than the feckless teenager I had been ten years earlier. I

had since converted to Russian Orthodoxy and you regularly took me to St Nicholas Church in Stratford. The photo shows the three of us in July 1986.



By now I was ready to take my studies seriously and I completed my BA in 1988. Of course I continued taking the language. While Riurik Dudin was my teacher that year, I saw the you and Konstantin Dmitrievich quite frequently, especially at the weekly *Russkii stol* in Davenport. And when I was admitted to the doctoral program in History in 1991, we continued to keep in touch. You took me to church and I continued often to dine at the *Russkii stol*. Just after I completed my PhD, my supervisor, Paul Bushkovitch organized a party in my honour and asked me if I would like to invite anyone else. Naturally, I thought of you, Emilia Pavlovna.

We stayed in touch after graduation. In fact, you even took the train up to St Catharines in Canada to visit us. Every trip back to Yale always includes a visit to you. I hope there will be many more.

Многая лета, Емилия Павловна!

David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye

From Sarah Stolz

Dear Emilia Pavlovna!

Congratulations on reaching the ripe young age of 90! It speaks of your warm heart and generous spirit to have lived such a long life and touched so many people with your kindness.

How well I remember first year Russian class. We were a little family with just 9 or so of us altogether. You and Konstantin were the watchful parents, ever ready to encourage us as we began our college life. Even when we moved on to other teachers, you two were still watching over us, always ready to lend a helping hand. Thank you for all your kind attention so many years ago and for your encouragement even after leaving Yale.

С днём рождения!!

‘Сапа Нормановна’

Sarah Stolz, ‘80

## Many Happy Returns



## Candles



From Margaret Tirs O'Neill

Dear Emilia,

We are so happy to be with you to celebrate your 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. This is a huge milestone, indeed.

Of your 90 years, I have known you for almost 68. That, too, is a milestone. I vaguely remember how you met us at a pier in Manhattan in June of 1951 when we arrived from Germany on a military troop transport. I was only 5 years old. But, you already knew about me since before I was born.

I believe that I could write a book about our long friendship, but I'll keep my reminiscences to a few paragraphs. When I was 16, my parents allowed me to travel alone to Brooklyn to visit you and your Mother, Yelizaveta Kadratina (Auntie Milatos to me), on the occasion of the World's Fair. You were so beautiful. Your clothes and shoes were so stylish. I think I was a little envious. After a few days, we traveled by commuter train to Long Island – where your Mother was waiting for us. The house in the woods had such a wonderful aroma from her cooking, the beds were fluffy and the sheets were crispy white having been meticulously ironed.

I still have all the letters which you had written though the years. I believe they go back at least to the late 1970's – all neatly typed. This summer, I will go through them and organize them into a special box. My garage is full of treasures such as these.

Since the 1990's, we began talking on the telephone, sometimes for hours. They were sisterly conversations and I enjoyed them so much. There was always an anecdote or two which you would share with me. You talked about your Father, Mother and your family, which at one time was not small. We talked about Latvia, Russia and Greece. You had such an interesting life, a life of many difficulties, sadness but also joy.

Dear Emilia, thank you for all the years of friendship, understanding and listening when I spoke about my parents. Their lives were much like yours, which is why we all had such a close connection. Jim and I wish you the happiest of days when we and many of your friends meet on the occasion of your birthday.

Tseluyu tebya, Mika



From Julia Titus

Dear Emilia Pavlovna,

We met in September 1992 when I began to teach Russian in the Slavic Department at Yale. You welcomed me at once and were very eager to share your vast teaching experience and knowledge. You kindly let me observe several of your Russian language classes, and I was able to witness first hand your exceptional talent as a teacher, your great commitment to your students and your rigorous and effective manner of conducting class sessions. You made me feel very comfortable, and I always felt that I could turn to you for advice or help.

Thanks to Emilia Pavlovna, I felt included right away in the life of the department. She immediately started to invite me to her Russian Table every Wednesday at Davenport College where I was able to meet many of her students and formed many long-lasting friendships. The atmosphere of the language table was always very warm and convivial, and students from the Russian speaking families mingled with Americans, providing many informal conversation opportunities for those who were just beginning to use the language outside the classroom setting. This informal opportunity to speak Russian and learn more about their classmates and a teacher was greatly appreciated by many generations of Mrs. Harmova's students who even after graduation maintained their strong connection to the department and to their teacher.

Mrs. Hramova and I became very good friends, and over the years we taught several courses together, and eventually even became neighbors when I fortuitously moved to a house on the same street as Mrs. Hramova's. Emilia Pavlovna has become as great a friend to my young daughters as she has always been to me, and they consider her a part of their family. I feel very fortunate that I had the valuable opportunity for many years to work and live alongside such an exceptional teacher and a person.

Julia Titus,

Senior Lecturer in Slavic Languages and  
Literatures

From Jane Van Voorhis Anstreicher

Dear Mrs. Hramov,

After nearly 33 years of friendship, I am honored to continue calling you Mrs. Hramov. Although something more familiar might signal intimacy to the outside world, *Mrs. Hramov* reflects all of my respect, gratitude and love. It also brings me back to the beginning of our friendship, as teacher and student, in the basement of HGS at Yale.

Thirty-three years! I am almost as old today as you were when we first met. I realize with some chagrin that I thought you were old then ... really old. But I also found you charming and warm and lively. You and Mr. Hramov did so much more than teach me Russian – you introduced me to an intriguing new culture, and ultimately opened the door to what became my early career in US-Soviet trade. An early riser, I started every day of the week, for three years of my four years at Yale, in the basement of HGS. I always felt your welcome, your interest and your concern. The Russian department became my haven.

I cannot pinpoint when it happened, but gradually, we moved from a teacher-student relationship to friendship. You and Mr. Hramov welcomed me into your lives as though I were family – encouraging me, cajoling me, worrying over me, advising me and feeding me. And feeding me. And feeding me again! You provided a somewhat naive and often homesick girl from Iowa with an academic home and a home-away-from-home. And then you watched me grow up.

I have been so blessed that our friendship has endured long beyond my years at Yale. You and Mr. Hramov continued to be family. I was honored to have you participate in many special occasions of my life – graduations, my wedding, even Thanksgiving with my entire extended family. You held my infants in Iowa, visited my young family in Belgium, hosted my brother and niece in your home and welcomed my children as they visited New Haven over the years. I can remember sitting with you when Kate first played on the swing in the Branford courtyard.

And now, Kate is about to enter that courtyard as a university student! Her decision to attend Yale is in large part a tribute to you. You and Mr. Hramov remain integral to the warmth I feel for my alma mater

and to my very fond memories of my time at Yale. I only hope that Kate finds her own *Mrs. Hramov* as she navigates her new course.

I wish I could celebrate this marker birthday with you. I send you best wishes, my gratitude and my love.

Happy birthday and many happy returns of the day,

Jane Van Voorhis Anstreicher