

Obituary

Nicole Hahn Rafter, Emeritus Professor of Criminology and Criminal Justice, Northeastern University 1939-2016

On 29 February, Nicole Rafter died suddenly and unexpectedly at Beth Israel Deaconess Hospital in Boston. Nicole—‘Nicky’ to her friends—was emeritus professor of criminology and criminal justice at Northeastern University where she had lectured since 1977. During her long and important career, she made significant contributions to criminology, including historical criminology, feminist criminology, and theoretical criminology. She opened up new debates, for example her 1985 article, *Gender, Prisons and Prison History*, challenged the leading explanations for the emergence of the prison, pointing out their neglect of gender perspectives. She followed this up five years later with *Partial Justice* (1990) which explored prisons for women with particular attention to the intersection of class and race/ethnicity. Her work always infused modern criminology with historical research. She contributed key articles on history to the ASC’s premiere journal, *Criminology*, that not only explained the development of criminology, but demonstrated the importance of a historical perspective. Together with Mary Gibson, she produced translations of Cesare Lombroso’s *Criminal Man and Criminal Woman* texts known to every student of criminology but actually read by very few.

She then turned to research into crime, media and popular culture. *Shots in the Mirror* (2000) examined the place of crime films in society. In her article *Crime, film and criminology: Recent sex crime movies* she proposed that crime films as kind of popular criminology that should be understood as part of academic criminology, thus provoking interest in a new area for social scientists. Her most recent work involved articles about genocide films and gender and genocide, again prompting a new direction for researchers.

Nicole Rafter received her PhD in criminal justice from the State University of New York at Albany. She had started lecturing at Northeastern University in 1977 where she was an innovative and engaging teacher. She held a number of posts as visiting scholar, including the University of Liverpool, University of Oxford and University of Sydney. She was an active member of the ASC and received the Sutherland Award in 2009.

Nicole was a dedicated scholar and an active researcher who delighted in encouraging others. She was generous with her time; a friend, colleague and mentor to many PhD students and early career researchers. Through her work and life, she demonstrated the depth and potential of her chosen field of study, criminology, and she will be missed.

Barry Godfrey, University of Liverpool and Paul Knepper, University of Sheffield
