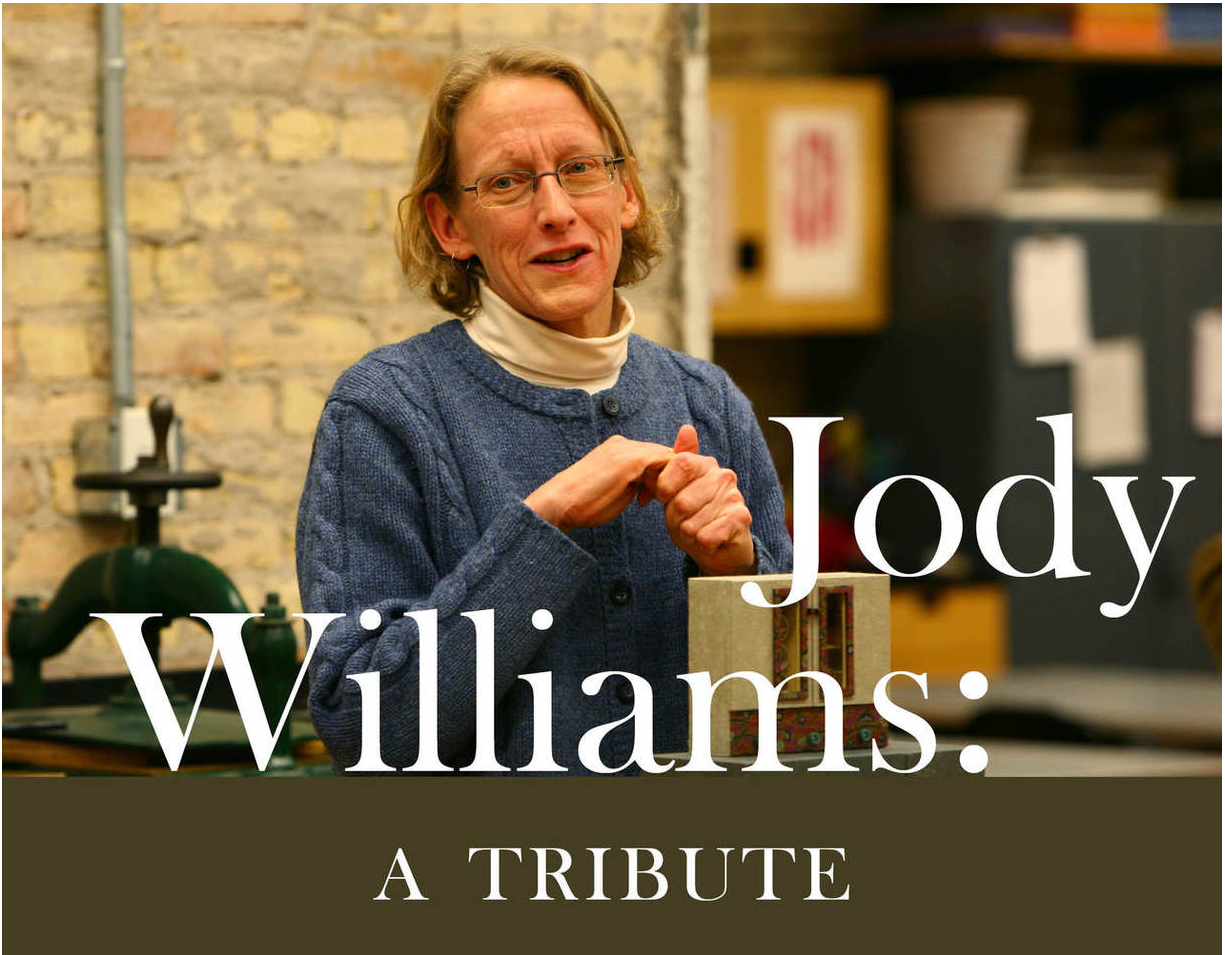


**MCBA**

**MINNESOTA  
CENTER FOR  
BOOK ARTS**



## **Remembering a Talented Book Artist, Teacher & Friend**

We were saddened to learn of the death of Jody Williams, a longtime member of the MCBA community, on October 17, 2023.

Jody was a two-time Minnesota Book Artist Award winner, most recently for her book, ***For Now***. Jody taught printmaking and book arts here at MCBA and at the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, and at museums and colleges across the United States and in Europe. Her

work is in the collections of the Walker Art Center, Minnesota Historical Society, the University of Minnesota, and many other museums, universities, and libraries. Small in scale, Jody's impeccable artist's books combined poetic writing, distinctive illustration, innovative structures, and a sense of magic and discovery.

She will be deeply missed.

---

## Stories & Sentiments from the Community

JODY WILL FOREVER BE REMEMBERED for her **kindness, humor, creativity and appreciation for the little things** in life. She was truly one of a kind and will be greatly missed by all those she impacted. —*Robyn Awend*

---

JODY WILLIAMS WAS A VISIONARY BOOK ARTIST and teacher whose **creativity and passion left an indelible mark on book arts and education**. She tirelessly pushed the boundaries of what could be achieved in book art, creating captivating visual and tactile artworks. Some of my favorite days teaching at MCBA were when Jody was teaching in the next room. We'd have long conversations after we were done teaching for the day. She often told me, ""It's all about the details."" A quiet lesson I carry with me during my art practice. Jody instilled this spirit in countless students, nurturing their artistic talents and igniting their curiosity. She was a beloved mentor and a revered figure in the creative community. Jody's absence leaves a profound void in book artistry, but her contributions will forever be treasured and celebrated. —*Heather RJ Fletcher*

---

JODY WAS PETITE IN PHYSICAL FORM BUT HUGE IN PRESENCE and her effect on those around her: the people she taught, the people she mentored, her friends, and family. **She left the world a better place filled with her goodness and her art.** —*Georgia Greeley*

---



*Jody's artist's book, For Now, won the 2019 Minnesota Book Artist Award.*

---



“I CAN GIVE YOU A HAND, BUT ONLY ONE HAND,” said Jody, after breaking a bone on her wrist. Jody is a giant vessel full of wisdom, generosity, and humor. I was honored to be called “friend” by her, when she finally revealed the truth of her health to me two months ago. Even during the most difficult days, **she filled my snail mailbox with joy**. Just imagine that she probably has done so to many of the students she had during her long teaching career.

—*Sherry Muyuan He*

---

I’M SO VERY SAD THAT JODY IS NO LONGER WITH US, but I’m comforted when I think of all the people she has taught and touched, and how much of herself she has given us to carry forward. Jody’s easy smile, warm heart, quick wit, and eager-to-encourage spirit were all wonderful aspects of her personality. She was as lovely a person as the art she created, which was so Jody, through and through. Her work will continue to inspire me, especially her miniature cabinets of curiosities, their connection (and hers) to the natural world, and how she interwove the physical objects with her prints, words, and book art. I’ll always remember her confidence, as an artist and teacher, and in what she taught; at the beginning of her workshop in miniature boxmaking, for instance, **she demonstrated her confidence in the strength of the structure she was about to teach by inviting anyone in the class to stand on her tiny two-inch example box to prove it would support them undamaged—it always did**. Jody had an astounding ability to remain positive, good-humored, and engaged with her students and friends throughout her illness—so much so that I sometimes forgot she had cancer. She enriched my life and taught me many valuable lessons, both in book arts and living, and I’m deeply grateful to have known her. —*Hans Koch*

---

JODY WAS SUCH AN INSPIRATION TO ME and generations of printmakers, and she was just such a fun and lively person to be around. I remember talking with her about how she made her tiny books, and the way she shared her energy and excitement about her work made it feel like so many things were possible. She had lots and lots of great ideas, and **you always felt happier and more optimistic after talking with her**. She will be so missed, by so many.

—*Michelle Lee Lagerroos*

---



*Jody socializing at one of the many exhibition receptions she attended at MCBA.*

---



JODY MADE A HUGE IMPACT ON MY LIFE, both personally and professionally, for many years. Using her **wry wit and potent courage**, she taught me how to become a committed and fun-loving teacher, artist, bird enthusiast, and cyclist. I am so grateful that our paths crossed. —*Monica Edwards Larson*

---

JODY SHOWED HER AUDIENCES THE SMALL & DELICATE WAYS in which we can connect with the natural world. **Within her eyes we are all intertwined.** —*Erin Maurelli*

---

JODY WILLIAMS WAS MY FAVORITE PROFESSOR when I was an Illustration major at MCAD; she introduced me to book binding and grew my addiction to letterpress. It was Jody who took her class to MCBA one day and I absolutely fell in love with the community, book arts, and the organization in general. Jody encouraged me to apply for an internship with The Shop at MCBA and was a reference for me. I was able to start as an intern and have a five year career at MCBA as the Shop Manager. In this time I was able to work with Jody in the studios and **she became a mentor and friend. I am forever thankful to her** in introducing me to both “print paper book” and MCBA. Her amazing talent, sass, and bravery will be sorely missed. —*Evelyn Miller*



THERE ARE SO MANY MEMORIES I HAVE OF JODY; all of them involve laughter, her sharp wit, a willingness to share her deep knowledge and passion for making, and an **ability to create life-long connections with students and colleagues**. Her artwork is a testament to really looking at the world, even very tiny corners of it and pulling the wonder and joy from the sometimes ordinary and overlooked. I had a chance to visit with her not too long ago, and she introduced me to all of her caterpillars and butterflies. One had just hatched the day before and was gathering strength before being set free. Fly free, dear sweet Jody. You are greatly missed, but will never be forgotten. —*Bridget O'Malley*

---

IN 2005, JODY WILLIAMS WAS THE FIRST PERSON I REALLY CONNECTED WITH after moving to Minneapolis from the West Coast. As a teacher, mentor and friend, **her welcoming spirit and boundless creative energy kept me going** through those early times. She was one of a small cohort who introduced me to the wonders of artists' books and her continued support for my work was beyond measure. This unwavering support, coupled with her knowledge and dedication to excellence in craft, was something Jody gave to so many artists and students over the years and her amazing spirit will be sorely missed. —*Cathy Ryan*

---

JODY PAID ATTENTION TO THE SMALL THINGS, and then made them grand through her work: tiny details in the drawings and prints, her elegant and miniature handwriting, always accompanied by thoughtful comments and queries. **Her "Box Making Made Easy" class at MCBA was an eye opener**—she had so many techniques that were uniquely her own that were both meticulous and sure proof. I met Jody more than 30 years ago, dancing to the Café Accordion Orchestra at the old Loring Bar. As a friend, coworker, and fellow artist, Jody will be greatly missed. —*Karen Wirth*

---





*Jody giving an artist talk in the bindery*

In collaboration with community members and friends, MCBA is planning a **retrospective exhibition celebrating Jody and her work** in the Open Book Literary Commons in the new year. Stay tuned for more details and save the date for a **reception on Friday, January 26, 2024.**

---