

Vicki Bier: The next panelist is Jeanne Swack, and some of you in the arts may be surprised that at a symposium in honor of Denice Denton we have a professor of musicology on the program. And, I think it just shows how broad of a net Denice had in her willingness to be supportive of everyone she came across.

Jeanne Swack: Hello, my name is Jeanne Swack and I teach Music History, Baroque Flute, and Early Music Ensemble in the School of Music. I have taught here since 1987. I am also a full-time professor with a physical disability. I met Denice, like many people, under fairly trying circumstances. In 1994 my department voted to deny me tenure. While I won't go into quite all of the sordid details, which have taken on a certain ironic humor over time, suffice it to say that, one, it does matter whether your teaching evaluations are computed with a scale going in the right direction. [*Laughter*] And who says that musicians are good at math. Two, I have a disability, but I am not an "invalid." And three, most departments would consider the phrase, "She teaches like she's at Harvard," to be a compliment and not a reason for dismissal.

To put this in perspective, I went up for tenure while recovering from a spinal fusion, and two months later received the award for the best publication by a junior scholar in my field of musicology over the previous not one, but two, years. And for the record, as well, my teaching evaluations, whose backward computation seems to have triggered this, actually averaged excellent. And my department was presented with two tenure reports – the one I signed, which described me as an "excellent scholar," and the unofficial one by the same person, which characterized my research as "just barely adequate." By the way, this was not a male. Just to show you that this was not a gender discrimination issue. I was of course completely devastated and completely taken by surprise. I went to see both Phil Certain and Betsy Draine, and both of them said that my situation was embarrassing to the university, after all they'd like to think that we offer demanding courses and that our professors teach like they're at Harvard. They helped me to choose an attorney and gave me some recommendations of people to whom I could turn on campus for help. I believe it was Betsy who put me in touch with Denice. I was not prepared for the barrage of aid that ensued.

Those who describe Denice as a force of nature have got it exactly right. The first time I met with Denice, she went right to work. First, for both my information and entertainment, she sent me all of her documentation dealing with being locked out of the lab and her own tenure. Then we started on my case, since I filed an appeal with the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities. Since my department was provided with an attorney, I needed to hire an attorney, which was, of course, very expensive, and I had no savings. Denice and Vicki Bier got to work raising money to pay for my legal expenses. We had a barbeque, where I met some of the wonderful people in this room. Then they went from department to department to raise money. Finally they presented me with a substantial check and

a lovely card. I was unbelievably touched, I couldn't believe that they would do this for me. And to the numerous people here who contributed, I will be forever grateful.

Before I went to CFRR I asked for a second vote in my department. I made a presentation with a witness I had brought along from the math department and explained that my evaluations were reversed – and I'll add that my entire department's evaluations were reversed; it wasn't just mine – and eventually a sign appeared in the music office that said that, "Yes, you turn them all the other direction because they were all wrong." Now, much to my surprise, the very same staff person who had called the computer tabulations office to find out why my evaluations were reversed, stood up and denied to the faculty that there was anything wrong with the way my evaluations were tabulated. Conveniently, someone ran off with the actual evaluations themselves, leaving only the computer print-outs. Evidently they didn't think you could tell they were backwards from just the print-outs, but actually it was very obvious. I received a majority vote but was supposedly short of the two-thirds majority – and for both of my votes they counted all Extension votes as null, which is a little problematic. We went to the first hearing at CFRR only to find out that the papers prepared by my attorney, and at a cost of \$200 just for photocopying, were too hard to use by the committee. So they asked to supply them with copies in which every point had a little index tab attached to it. Needless to say, this was going to be a big project because this had to be in every single copy. But Denice, much to my complete astonishment, threw a "tab Jeanne's documents" party and accomplished the whole thing, and we even had fun doing it. This was later known as "Tab-Fest." So we went back with our newly tabbed documents in hand. There were two nights of questioning, after which the committee came to the conclusion that my department had behaved egregiously, and removed them from my entire tenure process. To my knowledge, this was the first time that this had been done on this campus. They decided I would get a new committee made up of people from other departments, and that for the first time my research would actually be assessed, since I'm in a largely performance department, and that three music colleges would be brought in at the expense of my department – I especially liked that part – to serve on my new committee. All of this, however, would not take place until the next year. By this point I was very stressed out. Denice continually told me that I'd have to get into "my zen state." Now, this nice, uptight Jewish girl has no zen state. *[Laughter]* But I did my best to hold it together with the help of Denice, Vicki, Lydia, Theresa, and various of my helpers, I did manage to get through the rest of my semester, survive the summer, and make it through the fall semester of the next year. I finally met with my new committee, submitted the best-looking tenure dossier probably ever submitted from my department – prepared quite expertly by David Musolf, the Secretary of the Faculty – and, having committee members each attend one of my ensembles concerts, and received a unanimous positive vote from my substitute committee. I then went to the humanities divisional committee where I also apparently received a unanimous vote and was awarded tenure a year late.

The battle scars remain. Anyone who has been through this will confirm it. Since 1993 I've had three back surgeries and two brain surgeries, and none of these compare to what I've been through with tenure. The lessons that I learned from this were, first, that there are wonderful people in the world who will selflessly devote themselves to helping people they just met, and Denice was the shining example. We need to continue that for the next generation. Second, I found out that there were wonderful people in my own department whom I barely even know, but who tried to stand for principle. Third, we need to treat our colleagues with respect and not be ruled by the petty jealousies that can ruin people's lives. This goes on far too often in academia and it really has to stop. I don't think I'd still be here were it not for Denice. She gave me the will and the knowledge to fight an injustice, and I'm still here and a full professor. I will be grateful to her and all my helpers forever. Thank you.

[Applause]