I am honored beyond words to speak at the Center’s recognition of Kris Peterson-Ishaq’s decades of outstanding service to our research communities--to us.

Okay, I am never really beyond words, so let me continue. In preparing these remarks I cast my mind back to the misty past of 1979. I have vague memories—are there any other kind nowadays?—of sitting in on a couple of interviews with Kris, then an applicant for Center coordinator.

I remember thinking, wow, here is this attractive young woman, dressed to the nines, being interviewed by Sam Hand and myself. Having a well-dressed person in the office was a notable event in itself. To be charitable, Sam and I adhered to the early compost school of dress.

I personally did not hold Kris’s sartorial eloquence against her because there was one thing that really stood out on her resume. She was a translator of Arabic to English and English to Arabic.

Those of you who knew Sam probably recall that he often needed a translator. He had a tendency to begin in the middle of one thought over here, wander off hither and yon on several digressions, before ending in the middle of another thought over there. I used to watch the growing consternation of those trying to follow Sam’s reasoning. They desperately searched for a verb, conjunction, or some other clue to where Sam’s soliloquy was headed. Thus, as a translator Kris had my vote. She ably served as Sam’s interpreter over the rest of their collaborations. For that alone, we thank you.

But obviously Kris’s sustained contributions to Vermont research and researchers go far beyond that. Indeed, I think it is hard for us to grasp the range of those contributions.

It is even hard to know where to begin. Therefore, let me start with the simplest--a partial enumeration of her achievements. Kris was the managing editor for publications and, among other achievements, published sixteen of the Center’s occasional paper series. She also published conference proceedings and bibliographies, was editor of the Center newsletter, and was a leader in publishing *Vermont State Government since 1965*, the Center’s collaborative update of Andrew and Edith Nuquist’s *Vermont State Government*. Over the years I have used those volumes countless times to aid my research and to help others.

Kris helped write grants and was instrumental in two major Center grant-funded projects. First there was the 1985 to 1987 series of presentations that were subsequently published as *Lake Champlain: Reflections on Our Past*. That was followed in 1990 to 91 by a series of presentations that became *We Vermonters: Perspectives on the Past.*

Kris worked to sustain and make successful the Center’s research in progress seminars. She helped the Center establish Vermont Studies. She arranged annual meetings, provided the ability and intelligence needed to turn inchoate ideas from members into seminars, publications, grants, and effective outreach.

But even a partial list of her contributions to the Center is inadequate. There is the very demanding work she accomplished to make all those contributions happen. She worked with a succession of Center directors of different interests, focusses, and commitments. She navigated the shoals of the University’s changing appreciation of Vermont as an educational and research tool.

And while I will be the first to admit that I am a rational and accommodating sort, this is not a universal trait among Center members. Kris cajoled, re-enforced, and occasionally threatened members to meet deadlines and commitments (I am not sure how widespread that threatening thing was, I am just speaking from personal experience).

Again, all this still seems inadequate. How do you adequately encompass Kris’s decades of commitment to the Center and Vermont research? How many hours did Kris spend attending and facilitating research seminars, presentations, grant projects, executive committee meetings. How many hours did she spend making sure RETN was there, rooms were booked, and presenters had what they needed?

At these presentations she was often accompanied by Mousa. I think we are all improved by Mousa’s presence and participation.

After Kris’s long and successful career as our coordinator she continued to make contributions to Vermonters. One notable example is her co-editorship of *The Vermont Difference: Perspectives from the Green Mountain State.* Currently she is a co-editor of the upcoming *Green Mountain Scholar: Samuel B. Hand, Dean of Vermont Historians.*

Kris’s work truly exemplifies the lifetime achievement award’s celebration of “enduring, significant, and positive influences on the state, including our culture, civic life, research and educational institutions….” She is a motivator, leader, and catalyst to much of what we have accomplished over the last four decades. But even beyond that, Kris is a good person. She has helped us not simply as researchers but as individuals; not simply as a coordinator, but as a friend. And that is quite an achievement.