

I came to Duke for the first time in 1988, as a visiting scholar. It was my first time in The United States. My English was not so brilliant and the Southern accent was beautiful to listen to but impossible for me to understand. I did a lot of uncomprehending smiling at the time. But at the Department I found two very special persons: Peggy and Rita Dowling. They smoothly organized everything I needed and helped me find an apartment. I was amazed: such things were so difficult in Italy, but they made things happen in no time. But most of all they made me feel at home. Often we would go together with the other secretaries to have lunch in some special place. Peggy organized some such lunches in a restaurant facing a beautiful golf club. In the following years Rita left and Peggy stayed. Every time I came back I would immediately go and see Peggy. I was so happy to see her welcoming and warm smile. We would invariably compliment each other on our outfits or new haircut – we both loved clothes – and then catch up on our lives. Even after absences Peggy remembered and made me feel part of her life. The last time I talked to her was just before she was having surgery. Even at that time she left me saying “I love you, darling”. I love you too, Peggy. ~ Marina Bianchi