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## In Remembrance of Dr. Samantha Rachel Gorse Roberts

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## In Remembrance of Dr. Samantha Rachel Gorse Roberts

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I was asked by Dr. Mar Magnusen, President of the Applied Sport Management Association, to write a brief piece about my dear friend and colleague, Dr. Samantha “Sam” Gorse Roberts. It was such an honor to know her and to call her friend. The two of us were adjoined at the hip for over five years. The most unlikely of mates, Sam, a wonderfully brilliant scholar from the UK, a cricket and international football (soccer) fan and myself, a self-proclaimed hick from South Carolina, the most loyal SEC fan you might meet and the least likely person to even turn on cricket or international soccer before Sam had me educated proper. Yet, we taught together, wrote together, even walked a student to the grave together a few years ago after a tragic car accident. We sat next to one another while our Texas A&M University-Commerce Lions football team won the 2017 Division II National Championship. Our eyes were filled with tears as the players, some of them our sport and recreation management students, had just been crowned champions. We sat next to one another at volleyball, men’s and women’s basketball, softball and of course, women’s soccer matches. We advised students together, wrote chapters on corruption in sport together, and would strategize every day behind the scenes on how to motivate our students and see them reach their full potential.

Samantha was an incredible person. She attended high school at Adams School, graduating in 1995. She then attended the University of Wolverhampton, UK, earning her BA (Hons) in Marketing & Sport Studies in 2002. She then went on to earn her MA in International Business in 2004. In 2014, she finished her studies for her PhD in Strategic Sport Marketing from Coventry University, UK. She held academic appointments at Coventry University, UK for four years, before coming to the United States in 2016 to take a position as Assistant Professor in Sport & Recreation Management at Texas A&M-Commerce. Samantha recently achieved tenure and was promoted to Associate Professor in the department of Health and Human Performance. She was an active member of the North American Society for Sport Management (NASSM) and the Applied Sport Management Association (ASMA). She was an expert in areas such as corruption in sport, marketing and branding, and was just about to launch an initiative on hidden disabilities in sport and recreation. She presented research with colleagues and students all over the world. Though a prolific author, having been published in numerous prestigious journals, she was humble. I, and those who knew her, miss Samantha dearly.

Samantha passed away in 2021, and I had the difficult but important task of delivering the eulogy at her funeral this past fall. I then had a second opportunity to speak about my dear friend at the 2022 ASMA conference in Indianapolis. At the conference I was asked to share a little about her life and career because the leadership of ASMA decided to name the case study competition in her honor. It is now titled, The Dr. Samantha Roberts Case Study Competition.

It is so befitting that this competition, one that Samantha loved so dearly, shall forever bear her name. She was immensely devoted to teaching through case studies and she greatly enjoyed this annual competition.

What I think is most important to share regarding Samantha and the case study competition is the love and appreciation she felt for ASMA. She really loved everything about the ASMA conference. She loved that it was small and that it was tight-knit. She loved the application of theory, the beyond the traditional academic setting sharing of knowledge, and how at ASMA everyone is eager to share and apply what they learned. Sam often talked about feeling valued at ASMA, and that she believed she was a genuine member of the leadership team. If Sam were here with us, she would boast, “In a sport world dominated by white males, you allowed a large lady from England to have a starting role!” Bless you ASMA and all that helped make this decision possible. The memory of my beloved colleague, Dr. Samantha Roberts, lives on!

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**Dr. Samantha Rachel Gorse Roberts**

**(1976-2021)**