

U.S. and saw striking similarities to the ways in which both groups of youth experienced discrimination. Hristo spoke about how the labels of “thieves,” “prostitutes,” “ignorant,” “uneducable” have been used to criminalize and marginalize Romani children, and I could have said exactly the same for my Latino immigrant students. Clearly something deeper than “cultural differences” were at play here.

Due to this awakening of my knowledge about Roma, I decided to apply for a Fulbright fellowship to Hungary so I could do some research on my own. I wrote to Hristo about the possibilities of doing joint research and he was extremely supportive. I ended up teaching at the University of Pecs, Hungary, which was fortuitous. Pecs houses the only academic Department of Romology Studies and Gandhi School, the only college preparation school for Romani youth, in the world.

During this semester-long sabbatical in 2003, I also was able to travel to Sofia to visit Hristo in Bulgaria and he generously showed me nearby school sites where Romani youth were bussed out of their home neighborhoods to unwelcoming schools, or disproportionately placed in special education classes or schools. After this experience, we decided to co-write an article comparing desegregation in the U.S. and Bulgaria. This collaboration resulted in a book chapter, “The complexity of language issues in school desegregation: Case studies of Latino students in the U.S. and Roma students in Bulgaria,” published in the 2005 book, *Language in multicultural education*, edited by R. Hoosain & F. Salili.

Working on that book was not always smooth and easy. Hristo has moved often from one place to the other, and I never would know where he would be at any one given time. But we did it! The last time I saw him was in Fall 2006 when he travelled to San Francisco from Massachusetts, where he had a Fulbright fellowship himself. He gave a talk to my class, Research in Bilingualism and Bilingual Education, and students who attended still talk about him and his lecture. Like me years back, most people in the U.S. know very little about the Roma and my students were thrilled to have the opportunity to meet such a famous scholar – one of three Roma in the world with a Ph.D.

To Dr. Kyuchukov: Very happy 50 years! You have made a profound difference in many people’s lives, and I am certainly one of them.

Prof. Dr. Susan Katz
University of San Francisco, USA

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Who is Hristo Kyuchukov? An enigma, a complex person of many sides, best illustrated by a series of vignettes from when he visited me at Smith College as a Fulbright scholar for several months in 2006.

I am waiting at the airport to pick Hristo up, unsure if I will recognize him after so many years. I meet a colleague in charge of foreign students at Smith College, and I explain my dilemma to him. More worldly than me, he advises, “Look at the shoes. You can always tell an Eastern European by the shoes”. I could.