Honoring "Technical and Professional Communicators as Advocates of Linguistic Justice in the Design of Speech Technologies" by Dr. Halcyon Lawrence

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The second volume of the special issue on Social Justice and Translation in Technical Communication is soon to be published in *Technical Communication and Social Justice* in 2024. This special issue is led by Dr. Halcyon Lawrence's brilliant article, "Technical and Professional Communicators as Advocates of Linguistic Justice in the Design of Speech Technologies." Her study highlights the increased use of listening devices in US schools, prisons, courts of law, and workplaces (among other spaces). These devices provide automatic speech recognition systems which facilitate listening and recognition of languages and dialects spoken by people of color, foreign speakers of English, and marginalized communities. However, Dr. Lawrence argues, these technologies come with built-in biases because of the failure of most designers to appropriately understand or translate the source languages. As co-editors, we are proud to publish Dr. Lawrence's piece as the first of this second half of the special issue. This article, like all of Dr. Lawrence's work, provides a groundbreaking model for understanding the role of linguistic justice in the design of speech technologies. In addition to providing a critical analysis of existing technologies, Dr. Lawrence calls on all technical communication scholars, teachers, and practitioners to take an active role in the (re)design of speech technologies. As Dr. Lawrence states:

> **"I argue that technical communicators—both researchers and practitioners—are in an ideal position to advocate for a more socially just design of speech devices and to assess and mitigate potential harms to marginalized communities with varying language backgrounds."**

We could never have imagined that the world would lose Dr. Lawrence before this issue was published. Her presence in the field, and in the world, are so deeply missed. We are honored to share this call with the rest of the field, and we are committed to taking up the responsibility of

following Dr. Lawrence's example by advocating for social justice and translation in scholarship, teaching, and everyday practice. Dr. Lawrence led, and will continue to lead, the field of technical communication in establishing accessible, justice-driven practices. Dr. Lawrence always demonstrated the importance of taking action when it comes to linguistic inequities, not just in research, but in how we as researchers and teachers engage with each other, with our students, and with our communities. We dedicate the issue in her honor, and we hope others in our field join us in honoring Dr. Lawrence by taking action to redress linguistic injustice in and beyond technical communication.

Thank you, Dr. Lawrence, for sharing your brilliance with us all, and for always pushing us to envision and advocate for a more socially just world that recognizes language diversity in direct connection to racial justice, technological innovation, humane teaching, community building, and more. We will miss and remember you always.