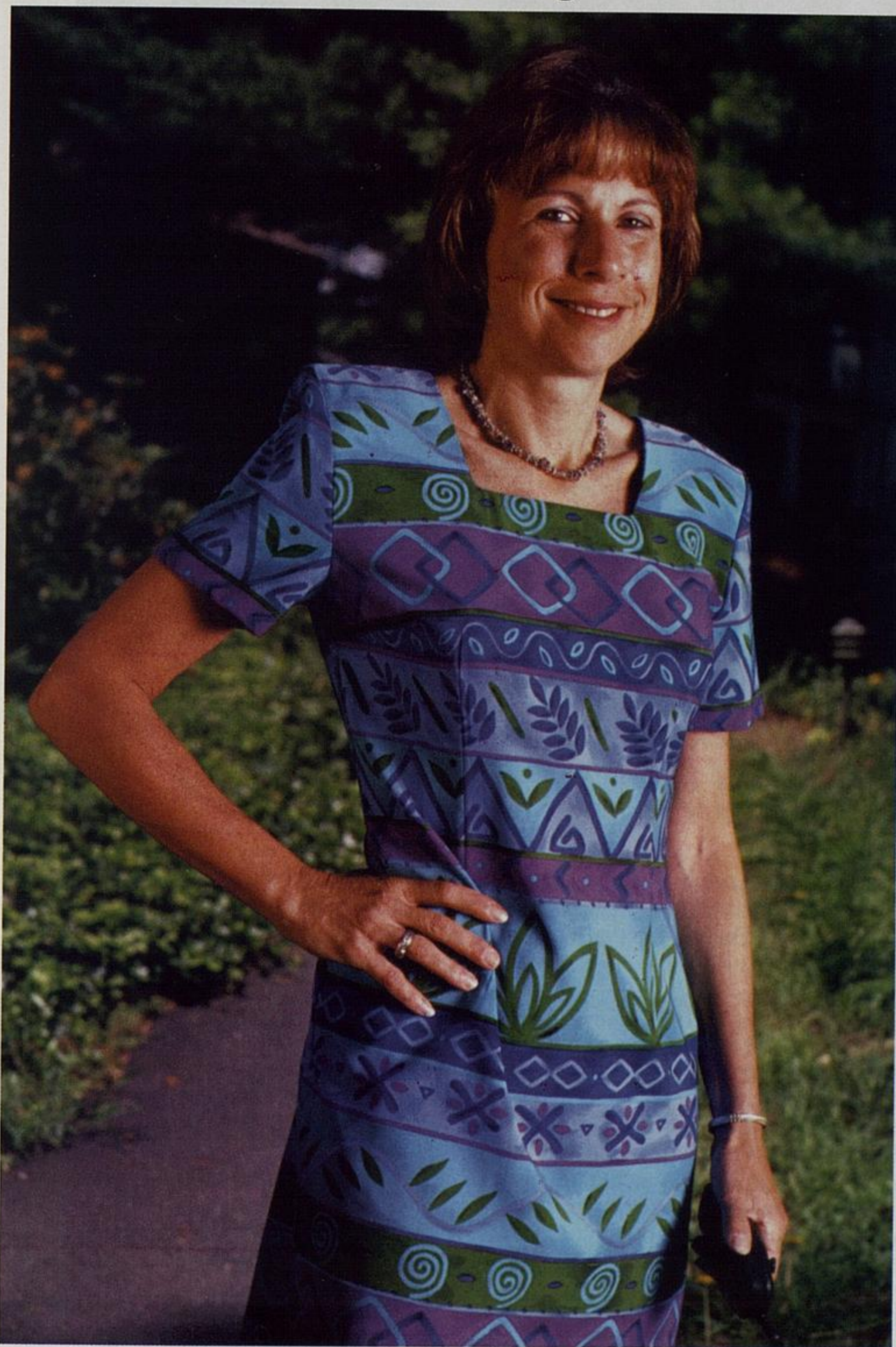


# Challenging Fattitudes: A Diversity Issue



## UK grad teaches acceptance in a world where size matters

By Linda Perry

Say the word ‘discrimination’ and people make a connection with race, gender, age, religion and physical disabilities. Often overlooked and still widely practiced is sizeism — the prejudice against overweight individuals. Psychologist Lisa Oppenheim Berzins, a UK grad, has spent much of her career focusing on issues relating to this injustice, as well as body image, eating disorders, the regulation of the diet industry, gender roles and self-esteem.

“Prejudice against people who are overweight is the only remaining socially-sanctioned prejudice that is based solely on physical appearance,” says Berzins.

Berzins has been featured in newspapers and on local and national radio and television programs. The Discovery Channel recently showed her as a large woman interacting with a group of six- and seven-year-olds while they were unaware that she was wearing a ‘fat suit.’

“I talked to them about attitudes toward friends and other kids based on how they look, and what they think about people who are heavy,” says Berzins.

Later, without the suit, she led a meaningful discussion with the students about their feelings toward her when she appeared overweight

Lisa Oppenheim Berzins