

Celebration of Life for Marianne Stoller

Colorado College Professor Emerita of Anthropology

Laurie Weinstein's Speech at the Celebration of Life for Marianne Stoller

"I am an alumna of Colorado College who graduated in 1976. I remember taking my first class with Marianne, an Introduction to Cultural Anthropology course, and when the course was over she asked me if I was an anthropology major. She said it in a questioning way, kind of in disbelief. Yes, I was an anthropology major and in the course of my studies at CC, in graduate school, and as a tenured faculty member at Western Connecticut State University, Marianne was always my mentor. I sought her advice often. She wrote recommendation after recommendation for me; she helped me understand the mechanics and politics of graduate school and full time teaching in a department. Wherever I was in the world, all roads led to Marianne. I came back to CC frequently where I often stayed with her. I walked the dog with her, went to the veterinarian with her and the cats, went fishing with her (although I don't fish; I just watched), and pretty much, I just listened to her. She would always be happy to talk to me and give me advice. I can still hear her say, "Well, hello Laurie" whenever I would call and then she would immediately ask me about my animals. We had our pets in common, in addition to anthropology. She even gave me life advice regarding the characters I dated, and I dated a parade of them. She was truly one of my best friends and my compass in the world. Marianne, you are missed. I still channel your voice and what I think your advice would be. And, I can still hear you say, 'How are the animals?'"

Moana Kutsche's Speech at the Celebration of Life for Marianne Stoller

Thank you all for coming today to honor my mother, and to celebrate her life. Let us use this opportunity to focus on our happy memories of Mom, and on our wonderful experiences together.

Memorials are often gathering of all of the deceased's family and friends. We often think, "Why didn't we do this when she was alive?" Fortunately, many of you were here two years ago when Mom received CC's Gresham Riley Award, so she did get to enjoy seeing you.

I have many fond memories of my mother. Among my favorites:

- Playing Yahtzee or some other game after dinner nearly every night;
- Working jigsaw puzzles - she always griped the she got stuck putting together the sky
- Fishing, of course, all over Colorado and New Mexico; catching my first fish on her property near Cripple Creek; offering a toast to the fish with a sip of sherry from a paper cup at the car's tailgate before we set out to drown flies and untangle snarls of fishing line;
- Seeing her work late into the night, grading papers, preparing her lecture for the morning, and, during my high school years, finishing her doctoral dissertation.

Like my grandmother before her, Mom loved to travel. I grew up tagging along on field trips, a kid mascot for summer institutes. Those are among my most precious memories. Later, she shared those travels with "The Diggers" and WES supporters. I am particularly grateful that my husband Brian and daughter Brigid were able to take some of those trips with her, to know the fun, adventure, and full learning of a Marianne Stoller tour (often run on "Stoller time"). My daughter shares her love of going new places and revisiting old, her fearlessness, and her dedication to scholarship.

So many of my memories include many of you. Fishing trips and field trips are among the most vivid and fun experiences that she shared with us. Mom was, first and foremost, a teacher. Her rigorous scholarship inspired us. Her love of the Southwest was so strong, so generous, so joyful, and so well informed, that she brought all of us into her world.

What strikes me most about my mother is her remarkable ability to bring people together through their experiences of the Southwest with her. Classes, summer institutes, Diggers trips, WES trips, the Bronco Bunch. People around her – particularly on trips – formed loving, lasting relationships with Mom, and with each other. They came back for more, again and again. Mom cared a great deal about all of her friends and students – you – and you reflected that love back to her. Several of her caregivers told me that she was like a mother to them, while they were taking care of her. She wanted to know who they were, what they were doing with their lives, where they were going. Thank you to all who took care of Mom over the past several years. You are amazing, giving people.

I'd like to thank all of you for being her extended family. That is how she thought of you. Thank you for keeping in touch with her, for visiting her, for being there as her health faded last fall. It meant the world to her.

I'd particularly like to thank my cousin Fred Tessler, who came to live with her last fall. Fred is a consummate chef and gracious entertainer. He made it possible for her to continue having people over up until her death. He wrangled caregivers, took care of details, and made sure she had what she needed and wanted. He is a rock star.

Thank you to my husband Brian Ehrmantraut and daughter Brigid, for their steadfast love and support, and for taking care of home, hearth, and hounds during my frequent trips to Colorado Springs.

Thank you to the College for organizing this Celebration, in particular Kate Holbrook and the Anthropology Department. Thank you to Chris Schluter for nominating Mom for the Gresham Riley Award, for setting up a memorial scholarship at the College to honor my mother, and for her years of friendship.

The child of two anthropologists learns some odd and interesting things, including burial and funerary customs. When Mom's body was cremated, a small box of grave goods went with her. In that box, I put:

- A pack of cigarettes
- A few New Mexico red chilies from a ristra
- Chocolate saved from her birthday celebration
- A sprinkle of ground coffee
- A Royal Coachman fly
- A few dog kibbles
- A few cat kibbles
- A small pine cone from the Christmas tree – always a little pinon
- A charitable donation favor with a Hopi design and a feather

I wrapped it up in Christmas paper and tied it with a bow, because she loved Christmas

Mom was not a religious person, but the land and people of the Southwest were at the core of her spirit. Let us have a final Marianne Stoller lessons in taking inspiration and comfort from that land. I'd like to share with you a quote by artist Ysela Provenicicio O'Malley, a watercolor artist living in Texas. Mom chose to place this passage at the start of an article she wrote for "The Desert Is No Lady".

I perceive man and woman as wanderers or pilgrims (peregrinos) passing through this world on their way to immortality. I feel that art is a proclamation of their spirit and their struggle, along with nature, to attain this immortality by dying and rising again.

Having grown up in the barren desert, I witnessed the desert become a symbol to this great mystery of resurrection. Through its seasons, the power of life over death is celebrated. The luminosity of the morning and evening sky is reminiscent of a person's spirit or soul and the river is the eternal flow of life. The mountains are reminders of our return to earth. I attempt to project this awesome mystery into my art"

Chris Schluter's Speech at the Celebration of Life for Marianne Stoller

"I was 19 when I met Marianne, and she was not yet teaching at Colorado College—so I didn't have the pleasure of taking a course from her. However, I had the great good fortune to count her among my closest and oldest friends—a condition otherwise known as lifelong learning.

I spent quite a bit of time with Marianne over more than 50 years—in Colorado, touring New Mexico, at pueblo dances, in the company of Southwestern artists, writers and scholars of all stripes, and watching Broncos or Rockies games. (How appropriate that she exited while watching a Broncos game and that her last words were "Who's winning?")

You know Marianne—always an inspiration and a lively, delightful companion, incredibly generous with her passion and knowledge. Many of you have shared similar experiences with her—a planned fishing trip, an unplanned one (or so her companions thought) with Marianne whipping out the fishing pole that lived in her car trunk at a trout stream that we “just happened to pass,” bringing out her yummy fudge or brownies at just the right moment, stocking up on essentials (meaning chocolate) for her bus tours, or telling one of her innumerable stories.

Here’s one: Marianne stopped with a class en route to Santa Fe to discuss the Spanish Peaks. Of course, she explained the Ute name for the Spanish Peaks—Huajatolla (wa-ha-toy-a), meaning “breasts” or “breasts of the earth.” A male student remarked that he didn’t see why the Utes called them that, since the peaks weren’t even. I can only imagine Marianne’s glee and the twinkling in her eyes when she shot back: “Well, have you ever looked at a woman’s breasts?” The student blushed furiously. The whole class, including the student, erupted in laughter. It was a bonding moment, and I’d guess that nobody in that class will ever forget the Ute name for the Spanish Peaks.

Marianne’s legacy is dazzling: Her research, her expert testimony in Lobato, a landmark legal case, her important role in helping build Colorado College’s wonderful sense of place, her professional leadership, her Women’s Educational Society tours

Her shining example of passion and commitment to scholarship and her ceaseless curiosity

The great and varied successes of her students, of whom she was so proud. Many in this audience are probably unaware of how much she bragged about you—I feel that I know many of you without ever having actually met you

The love and respect of her many, many friends and colleagues

And last—but also first—her daughter and granddaughter, of whom she was so proud. She leaves them as well as her beloved nephew Fred and all the glittering aspects of her legacy to us to hold and cherish.

In the words of Wallace Stegner, one of Marianne’s favorites, “Obviously you did not die. Death is a convention, a certification of the end of pain, something for the vital statistics books, not binding on anyone but the keepers of graveyard records. You are alive and luminous in my head.”

So Marianne is alive and luminous in all our heads and will remain so for as long as memory and impacts persist among those of us lucky enough to share her. Please honor her life and extend her impact for future generations by joining me in supporting the Marianne Stoller Scholarship for CC’s wonderful Bridge Scholars. This reflects Marianne’s lifelong commitment and actions. I will match your gift dollar for dollar for this most fitting testament to Marianne.”

Les Lewis’s Comments at the Celebration of Life for Marianne Stoller

Summary of speech:

Some twenty -five years ago the Anthropology Department decided to add a week to their annual summer field archeology class at the La Cienega site near Santa Fe, New Mexico for alumni. About fifteen folks of all ages and backgrounds showed up at an old motel in Santa Fe for a week of communal living, digging in rock-hard ground, doing some lab work and spending afternoons touring interesting sites in northern NM. Marianne was our faculty leader and “den mother” to a motley crew that did some useful work and had a great time. Marianne knew many people and places in the Southwest so we met some interesting people and saw many interesting places. Many of us formed friendships that flourished past the five years of active digging. We found the combination of learning about “new” places and getting together with friends from various parts of the U.S. very satisfying. Marianne dubbed our group “the Diggers” with her usual sense of humor, she was the heart and soul of the group. The Diggers have gathered annually in many parts of the U.S., Canada and Mexico and still do. Marianne’s talent for making learning fun led us to enjoy digging square holes in hot sun and occasionally rain. We will miss her.

Jane Cauvel's Speech at the Celebration of Life for Marianne Stoller

"Marianne -- You and I have been thinking, talking, fishing, wandering and kibitzing since 1960 when I arrived on campus. You and Buzz were the first to invite me to dinner on my arrival.

For a number of years after that, we saw each other only occasionally. You were teaching at UCCS, and you were involved in giving birth to and nurturing Moana--a grand success, I would say! I think you had the correct priorities! When you began teaching at CC, you suggested we co-teach a course on the way the arts reveal cultures and world views. I taught western, Anglo, theories of art beginning with the Greek ideals. You taught Hispanic, Native American, and Anglo arts as manifested in the SW. We immersed students and ourselves in the thoughts, activities and arts of the people.

Immersed--oh yes, that reminds me of the day I fell in the stream and Marianne, you tried to pull me out and fell in as well. You said as you looked at the stream you couldn't tell if it were you or the current going downstream. We were hypnotized by fishing, maybe as much by the stream itself, as by actually catching fish. As you wrote on your Xmas card "those were the days." ++ Oh I guess I must return to our academic world.

On field trips, we explored commonalities and contrasts in the purposes of artistic expression, in the materials used, and in the images of the gods, and perhaps most particularly in the dances and rituals.

Because of you, Marianne, we took students' into artist's homes, Hispanic villages, and Indian Pueblos. We talked to the artists as they carved Kachinas, and made sand paintings. We watched them weave rugs, and shape and paint the pots characteristic of their pueblo.

Because of you, we discovered the power of art to keep the earth rotating, to celebrate the seasons, to bring rain, to aid the hunters, and to cultivate and nurture crops--corn, beans and squash.

We students returned from these field trips awakened to new world views and ways of being. We expanded our Anglo world, and embraced our new Hispanic and Native American genes. We would never be the same.

For seven years we taught together and cultivated a lovely blend of scholarship and friendship. We even made positive use of our differences. Marianne you were a night owl and stayed up with the students' late night adventures, and I arose early in the morning to soothe their hangovers.

Our exchange of ideas, scholarship and friendship continued to your death. I continue to think with you, to agree, and to disagree and to bicker over our opinions.

Marianne, you are recognized as an important scholar of the South West, as an articulate and generous teacher, and a most constructive community member. In addition, for me, you are the embodiment of a good friend.

Now Marianne, to just a few of your misguided opinions:

- Fish won't bite unless you are smoking!
- The sun won't rise unless you begin the day with a cigarette!
- Humans evolved only because of coffee.
- Chocolate is a vegetable without calories.
- If you don't support the Broncos, Jane, you will be reborn as a monkey.
- Dusty, narrow roads get you to your destination faster than freeways.

Yes we have travelled many dusty roads together with beauty surrounding us.

Thank you Marianne for the knowledge, the experiences, and the amusement you have given me and will continue to do so.

Christopher Wray's Speech at the Celebration of Life for Marianne Stoller

Anyone that knew Marianne, understood she was a devoted angler — or in Marianne's parlance — a *fisherperson*. Marianne became my fly-fishing mentor and over the course of many seasons, we developed the bonds for a lifelong friendship. In his story, *A River Runs Through It*, Norman Maclean states, "There was no clear line between religion and fly fishing." I truly believe Marianne instilled this existential belief in me. The following two passages are from Maclean's *A River Runs Through It*.

"I sat there and forgot and forgot, until what remained was the river that went by and I who watched.... Eventually the watcher joined the river, and there was only one of us. I believe it was the river. Even the anatomy of a river was laid bare. Not far downstream was a dry channel where the river had run once, and part of the way to come to know a thing is through its death. But years ago I had known the river when it flowed through this now dry channel, so I could enliven its stony remains with the waters of memory."

"My father was very sure about certain matters pertaining to the universe. To him all good things—trout as well as eternal salvation—come by grace and grace comes by art and art does not come easy."

Marianne embodied both grace and art in all she accomplished and she inspired these qualities in the many lives she touched.
