



IN MEMORIAM



Remembering Suzanne Stewart (1939–2019)



Suzanne Stewart on a trip to a Guatemalan market in 2007. Photograph courtesy of Mira Talbott-Pope.

Suzanne Bestor Stewart passed away on 1 July 2019. Suzanne was well respected and loved at the Anthropological Studies Center (ASC), Sonoma State University (SSU), where she worked for more than three decades as an archaeologist and editor. Suzanne knew her grammar and how to write. As I feebly attempt this piece, I imagine Suzanne putting in hyphens and taking out commas. We never did agree about grammar—I don't like rules—but Suzanne knew her stuff and was always correct, even when I overruled her for what I considered aesthetics.

I considered Suzanne a friend in the Vera Mae Fredrickson genre—someone honest and straightforward, someone to be a little afraid of (Suzanne would have pointed out: dangling preposition = bad). She probably met the Fredricksons through her sister, who was involved in the music scene at their house. Suzanne had worked as an editor for the Science Curriculum Improvement Study at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley, from 1967 to 1974. Funded by the National Science Foundation, Lawrence Hall supplied educational and promotional materials for elementary school physical and life science curricula.

Suzanne received her B.A. in Anthropology from SSU in 1978 and shortly thereafter Dave Fredrickson asked her to join the Warm Springs Dam archaeology team. The Warm Springs project went through many phases over the decades. Related projects and other activities in the area provided one of Suzanne's main research interests over her long career. Suzanne received her M.A. in Cultural Resources Management (CRM) in 1993 with a thesis on the Upper Archaic in the Warm Springs area (Stewart 1993). She was certified as a Registered Professional Archaeologist in 1999. Suzanne met her future husband, Christian Gerike, while they both were working on the Warm Springs Project.

In the early 1990s, Suzanne left the ASC for a few years to work in the Sierra Nevada foothills, first with Archaeological Services as a senior archaeologist/editor from 1990 to 1991 and then as part of her own small consulting firm, Stewart/Gerike Consultants, from 1992 to 1994. She had lead responsibility for the firm, including all aspects of project work. She also served as a board member and editor for the newsletter of the Central Sierra Archaeological Society during this time. Suzanne was also the editor of the *International Association for Obsidian Studies Bulletin* from 1998 to 1999.

Suzanne helped Adrian and I tremendously when we put out our first major report on the Golden Eagle Site in 1980 (Praetzellis, Praetzellis, and Brown 1980). This huge tome, with 15 contributors, was prepared on a typewriter—making editing extremely difficult and time consuming. A few years later, the three of us collaborated on the Warm Springs final report series: a comprehensive history (Praetzellis, Praetzellis, and Stewart 1985) and three monographs, including one on prehistory (Stewart 1985). When complimented on his writing, Dave Fredrickson always gave full credit to Suzanne and so do we.


Suzanne never used red ink or snide comments to get her edits across. She simply let the changes speak for themselves. Her critical review and keen sense of style helped hundreds of SSU students improve their writing and analytical skills to finish their first site report in good form, preparing them for the working world.

Of course, Suzanne was much more than an editor. She made her own contributions to the field as an archaeologist—excavating sites, analyzing material culture, researching whatever took her fancy. Her work spanned the discipline: ethnography, prehistoric archaeology, historical archaeology, historic architecture, oral history, and CRM theory. A list of her reports would overflow the limits of this *News and Notes* section. The online Digital Archaeological Record alone contains 49 listings for Suzanne B. Stewart between 1979 and 1991, with co-authors such as David Fredrickson, Christian Gerike, John Hayes, Allan Bramlette, and Adrian and myself. This is just the beginning. Suzanne was particularly proud of her overview and synthetic work, of which her archaeological overview of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area is but one example (Stewart 2003); her prehistoric overviews of California's northwest counties for the State Office of Historic Preservation are another.

The following are some selected major projects for which Suzanne Stewart was Principal Investigator, Field Director, and/or Researcher/Writer/Editor:

- Cultural Resources Survey of the Round Valley Indian Reservation in Mendocino and Trinity Counties (Stewart and Fredrickson 1979)
- Archaeological Investigations at CA-KER-824 in Kern County (Bramlette et al. 1982)
- Rockpile Road Upgrade Survey, Test Excavations, and Data Recovery in Sonoma County, 1985–1989 (e.g., Stewart 1987)
- Archaeological and Historical Architecture Survey and Test Excavations for the Stony Point Road Reconstruction Project in Sonoma County (e.g., Gerike and Stewart 1989)
- Cultural Resources Study, Archaeological Site Boundary Definition and Recording, and Test Excavations at CA-CAL-114/H in Calaveras County, 1992–1994 (e.g., Gerike 1992; Stewart and Gerike 1994)
- Evaluation Excavations, Mitigation Plan, Data Recovery, and Historic Property Clearance Report for the Poppy Hills Subdivision Project in Sonora, Tuolumne County, 1992–2001 (e.g., Stewart 2001)
- Historical and Archaeological Studies for the I-880 Cypress Freeway Replacement Project, Oakland and Emeryville, Alameda County, 1997–2004 (e.g., Stewart and Praetzellis 1997)
- Research Design, Treatment Plan, Geoarchaeological Investigations, and Data Recovery for the East Sonora Bypass Project, Tuolumne County, 2002–2006 (e.g., Meyer et al. 2004, 2006)


Suzanne was a great archaeologist and a brilliant editor. She had amazing analytical abilities and could retain, reshape, and recombine data from numerous archaeological sites in new and interesting ways. Suzanne was also the ultimate fixer. She knew the material and kept the rest of us from making embarrassing gaffes. She worked hard and never gave up on anything or anyone. Suzanne was missed from the day she retired from the ASC in 2009. Although she would have edited out the phrase as hyperbole, Suzanne is simply irreplaceable.

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Remembering Suzanne: A Student Perspective

The first time I met Suzanne, I was a new graduate student at SSU and working at the ASC, but fresh from the East Coast and completely oblivious to how the ASC did things. Suzanne immediately presented me with a comb-bound document with a wizard on the front and a look from her that was poignant and succinct—read and use this, the look said, but she spoke no words. This first interaction from the staff editor humbled me as a new student, yet empowered me to take control of my own product.

A few years later, I had the joy to approach Suzanne after I made a discovery that my thesis study area included an area near and dear to her heart, Rockpile Road (Much 2010). While never formally part of my thesis committee per se, Suzanne always made time to talk with me (or any other interested student) about my observations of the archaeology I observed on the private property I was studying near her project areas from the Warm Spring days and she joined in on several endeavors to Rockpile Ranch. Long talks about the land use of north-central Sonoma County from aboriginal times through current day, oddly modified rocks, and comparisons of upland versus valley land use patterns dominated our time and I always came away with new insights and questions. Suzanne's positive impact on me as a CRM professional is something that I feel every day, and even as I write this, I have had to rewrite parts multiple times. Bottom line, cheers to you Suzanne, we are all better having known you and you will always have a place in our hearts.

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Disclosure statement

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