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IN MEMORIAM

Sylvia Brakke Vane

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It is with great sadness that we note the passing of Sylvia Brakke Vane—anthropologist, writer, publisher, and friend and mentor to many—who for thirty years was an important and active member of the Malki community. Sylvia died in Menlo Park on July 13, 2009 at the age of 91.

Sylvia graduated from the University of Minnesota in 1939 with a major in medical technology and chemistry, but marriage and a growing family kept her from pursuing an active career outside the home for many years. However, in 1973, at an age when most people are beginning to plan their retirement, she returned to school, and in 1975 earned her M.A. in anthropology at California State University, Hayward. It was there that she developed an interest in California’s native peoples, and began what was to prove to be a long and fruitful collaboration with Lowell Bean that over the next thirty years resulted in the production of a significant body of both published and unpublished books, articles, and research reports.

In 1978, Sylvia and Lowell Bean founded Cultural Systems Research, Inc. in order to develop environmental impact and federal recognition reports for native groups not recognized by the federal government. Sylvia served as vice-president and financial manager, directed nearly a hundred different research projects in various parts of California, and co-authored and edited almost forty research reports stemming from that research.

In 1981, the partners bought and managed Ballena Press, an academic publishing house that produced numerous influential monographs on topics of interest to both academics and Native Americans, and that was recently subsumed under the rubric of Malki/Ballena Press. Sylvia served as president, business manager, and editor, and played a major role in ensuring the reputation that the Press garnered over time for publishing significant intellectual contributions to the growing literature on California’s native peoples. Sylvia also served on the Malki Editorial Board for many years, where her business acumen and wide expertise in all matters relating to Native Americans were greatly valued by her fellow board members.

Sylvia was a frequent participant in academic symposia (many of which she helped to organize) and was a familiar figure at professional conferences, where she was recognized as one of the preeminent authorities.
on Southern California Indian culture and history. In 1998, she was honored by the Society for California Archaeology with the Martin F. Baumhoff special achievement award, and in 2005 was presented with a lifetime achievement award by the California Indian Conference.

Typically, Sylvia stayed actively involved in her business and research interests until the last few months of her life. She was an active member of the Board of Directors of XEI Scientific in Redwood City, and at the time of her death was busy editing a book on the stories of the Cahuilla Indians, a biography of Francisco Patencio, a history of the Agua Caliente Indians, and a monograph on Cahuilla ethnzoology.

An award for young scholars interested in California Indian studies has been established in Sylvia’s name. It will be awarded at the annual conference of either the Society for California Archaeology or the Southwestern Anthropological Association. Contributions to the Sylvia Brukke Vane Scholarship Fund may be sent to Wells Fargo, 735 Santa Cruz Avenue, Menlo Park, CA 94025, for deposit in Account #1763279922.

PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH REPORTS
CO-AUTHORED BY SYLVIA B. VANE

Published Works

Bean, Lowell J., and Sylvia B. Vane

Bean, Lowell J., Sylvia B. Vane, and Jackson Young

Bean, Lowell J., and Sylvia B. Vane (eds.)

Vane, Sylvia B., and Lowell J. Bean

Unpublished Research Reports

Bean, Lowell J., and Sylvia B. Vane (as authors, editors, and compilers)
1980b The Ethnography and Ethnohistory of Potrero Canyon, Morongo Indian Reservation. Report by CSRI submitted to Science Applications, La Jolla, Cal.
1980d Snow Creek Ethnography. Report by CSRI submitted to Westec Services, Santa Ana, Cal.


1987 Ethnographic Resources Study: Candidate Sites Selection Phase. Report on research performed by CSRI for U.S. Ecology in conjunction with California Low-Level Waste Disposal Project.


1989a Ethnographic Resources Study, Phase III. Report on research performed by CSRI for U.S. Ecology in conjunction with California Low-Level Waste Disposal Project.


1990a Report on Ethnographic Resources. Report by CSRI in Reports on Siting Alternatives, Eastside Reservoir Study, Cultural Resources (Phase II), prepared for Metropolitan Water District of Southern California by Infotech Research.


1991c Petition to the Government of the United States from the American Indian Council of Mariposa County for Acknowledgement as the Yosemite Indian Tribe. Report by CSRI submitted to American Indian Council of Mariposa County.


1994 The Ethnographic Resources and Native American Concerns, Twenty-nine Palms, MCAGCC. Report by CSRI submitted to Ogden Environmental and Energy Services, San Diego, California.

1995 Archaeological, Ethnographic, and Ethnohistoric Investigations at Tahquitz Canyon, Palm Springs, California. Report by CSRI submitted to Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District. [With Jerry Schaefer.]


2003 Traditional and Contemporary Uses of Bautista Canyon Floral Resources. Report by CSRI submitted to Riverside County Transportation and Land Management Agency, Riverside, California. [With Dawn Wellman.]
