

## Anniversary Celebration Turns Into a Vacation in Guatemala for Marcie

By Marcie Ambrose

A 50th Wedding Anniversary celebration was a great reason to travel to Guatemala to celebrate with my daughter-in laws'-parents. The rich music of marimbas filled the hall. The ceremony was lovely as Joaquin and Nora renewed their vows of love. They were proud to have their (our) grandsons participate in the ceremony. It was fun to meet family and friends. But after this celebration, we were ready to see the historic sites throughout this country.

Joaquin rented a van that was large enough to transport all 11 of us. Who knew the traffic in Guatemala City would be worse than the traffic in

downtown Los Angeles. Imagine an L.A. traffic jam, add a few more cars and then add three motorcycles for each car weaving in between the cars with stop signs merely a suggestion!

The malls were drenched in Christmas lights and decorations. I found a clearance sale and purchased two pairs of Crocs for 89 Quetzales. Each pair cost the about \$11 in U.S. dollars. The local markets are so colorful and line the streets. It is fun walking among the people, hearing the music, smelling the freshly cooked foods and tasting the native dishes. These native dishes included Pipiyán, a traditional Mexican sauce, similar to mole, known for its rich, nutty, and spicy flavor, thickened primarily with ground pumpkin seeds. Ponche (meaning "punch" in Spanish) is a warm, spiced Mexican fruit punch traditionally served during the Christmas holidays and at Las Posadas celebrations. In Cobán, we enjoyed Kak'ik a traditional, spicy Guatemalan turkey soup of Q'eqchi' Mayan origin.

We went to the Plaza de la Constitucion (Constitution Square), the largest square in Guatemala. The National Palace of Culture is on one side and the Cathedral of Guatemala City on the other side. We walked on the see-through glass bridge in Bambú, the panoramic views were breathtaking. The blue sky was full of cumulus clouds.

Hobbitenango, Antigua, 8000 ft elevation featured 26 different areas to explore. There are three hobbit-style cottages that you can rent for the night. The beauty of San José Cathedral dominated Antigua Square.

On Thanksgiving, we went to Lake Atitlán, a volcanic crater lake, surrounded by Mayan villages. It is 11 miles long and 5 miles wide and



1100 feet at its deepest. While sailing around the lake, we saw a couple "castles." Samabaj is an underwater Mayan city, submerged by a sudden lake rise, often called the "Mayan Atlantis." it is accessible by diving tours.

The Mayan ruins in Tikal were a 10-hour bus ride each way. The Tikal rain forest with the Mayan village ruins

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# Guatemala Offers Beauty and Adventure

with their pyramids and temples was fascinating.

We could hear the monkeys screaming in the forest. It was a long trip, but definitely worth it.

We drove to the family home in San Jerónimo.

The rhythm of this village is calm. We toured the regional museum which houses the first sugar cane mill in Central America, 18th century. We honored ancestors as we visited the local cemeteries and placed flowers on their grave sites.

My family went home on Dec 4, but I stayed until Dec 16th. Being retired makes it a lot easier to extend my va-

cation. My consuegros continued to be gracious hosts.

They drove me to Guatemala City Temple and Cobán Temple of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The majority of the people in Cobán are Mayan. The temple session I went to in the Cobán Temple was in K'iche.

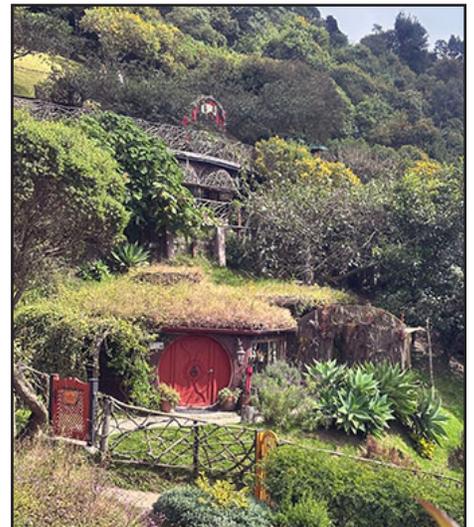
We also witnessed La Quema del Diablo, "Devil Burning" which is an annual tradition on December 7 that marks the beginning of Christmas. Effigies (often piñatas) of the devil are burned in bonfires to symbolize purification and expulsion from evil. That tradition welcomes the festive season, celebrat-

ing the triumph of faith over evil and preparing the home for the Immaculate Conception on December 8.

Members of the San Jerónimo Association held a Christmas celebration Dec 14th which included a posada, piñatas, prizes, dinner and a visit from Santa.

Although the language was different, the joy and love came through loud and clear. I never felt like a stranger there; the people are humble, welcoming, vibrant and loving.

As I prepared to leave, I felt like I was leaving home and family in Guatemala to come back to home to family in California.



# Dona Mitoma and Her Husband Traveled to Peru To Study Japanese Families

By Dona Mitoma

In fulfilling a bucket list item, not only did Dona Mitoma and Marvin Inouye visit Lima, Machu Picchu, and Cusco, Peru in the fall of 2025, but we also investigated the Japanese population living there before, during, and after World War II.

In cooperation with the United States government, wealthy Japanese from Peru were sent by the Peruvian government to a concentration camp in Crystal City, Texas.

We had previously met Maurice Yamasato at the Crystal City Pilgrimage in 2019. His family was jailed in an American "justice camp." This part of history was unknown to Dona.

The Yamasato father was an entrepreneurial immigrant to Peru from Japan. He started five different businesses and became very wealthy. They had a chauffeur, housekeeper, cook, and a nanny for each of the five children. When Maurice's father was arrested, his family accompanied him to Crystal City, Texas.

The U.S. government was intending for them to be exchanged as prisoners of war with Japan for American diplomats captured in Japan. After the war, the family discovered that their passports were destroyed by the U.S. government. With no passport, they had no country. Peru didn't want them back as they had already sold off their belongings and their businesses.

Maurice and his family luckily were able to go to Hawaii after being sponsored by his older sister who had married a Hawaiian. Maurice's family put down roots again. Maurice grew up and became an architect graduating from the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Peruvians who had no other place to go were returned to war-ravaged Japan, a place the children had never experienced.

Our interest in Peru therefore was more than just Machu Picchu. We found that the Japanese Peruvian population was very close knit and numbered about 200,000. They built a Community Center, a museum, a theater, and a health clinic all on adjoining properties in downtown Lima. A young woman at the museum who knew some English gave us a personalized tour of the museum and Community Center. We took her to lunch and asked her if she were to marry, would she marry a Peruvian? A



Japanese Peruvian? She said she would marry a Japanese Peruvian which was very informative.

In addition to exploring this Japanese Peruvian history, we visited many archaeological sites in addition to Machu Picchu. We found the food to be delicious, prepared and fresh.

A highlight for us was visiting the Larco museum, the largest museum (45,000 objects) in Lima. They have 5,000 years of Peruvian history on display. It is an unbelievable collection of pre-Columbian ceramics and Inca artifacts founded by Rafael Larco Hoyle an early Peruvian archeologist. The collection in storage is visible to the public in glass cases.

We also visited the Amano museum of textile art. This is a private museum underwritten by a wealthy Japanese Peruvian businessman whose hobby was digging for artifacts in the deserts of Peru in his spare time. He became fascinated with textiles and collected an unbelievable collection of very old textiles that were woven delicately like spider webs or gauze.

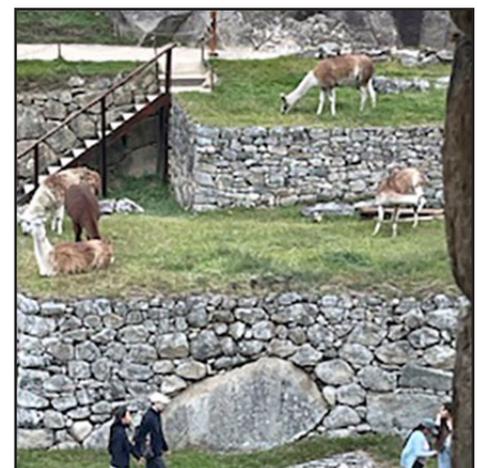
The Peruvian government and people are committed to preserving their past. Archeological sites sit side-by-side next to residential neighborhoods. It was in stark contrast to American policy.

A delicacy in Peru is "cuy," and guinea pig is our name for this meat. I had a small bite, but I couldn't eat much more. The altitude is a very big concern for tourists in Peru. The city of Cusco is

11,000 feet and Machu Picchu is about 8,000 feet. We acclimated to the elevation by taking altitude medication and drinking coca tea and eating coca candy. Hiking around was challenging but with short breaks to catch our breath, we ended up doing pretty well.

One of the best parts of this trip was our extraordinary tour guide, Walter Torres and the other interesting 14 people in our group.

We like Overseas Adventure Travel and Road Scholar because they limit their tours to about 16 people per group. As we were returning home, we said to each other we probably should have taken this trip 10 years ago as we were more fit then than we are today.



Alpacas can be seen climbing walls.

# The Only Bookstore in Town, Almost

By Lisa Davis

When I moved from the Pasadena area to Los Gatos four years ago, the only bookstore in town was the used-bookstore of the Friends of the Library. The local Barnes & Noble had gone out of business about 10 years earlier, and a children's bookstore before that. I was dismayed: I expected this town of 32,000 to have at least one bookshop.

A lot of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs live in town; are they too busy making money to read? Duh, you say, what about Amazon, Kindle, and online books? Good point: they are handy, and so are libraries. But not a single bookstore in town?

Since the used-bookstore of the Friends of the Library was in the same complex as the Los Gatos Library, I checked it out and was



amazed. The large, L-shaped room, with wall-to-wall glass panels on each end, practically pulled you in. The two volunteers in the store were friendly and helpful. The wall-to-wall books promised me great choices.

The prices were low; what's not to love here? I asked about volunteering, got an application form, and completed it on the spot. A few days later, Sue, the volunteer organizer called

me, and we set a date for my orientation. I have been a dedicated bookstore volunteer ever since.

I'm no newcomer to volunteering. I was a volunteer docent at The Huntington Library for 28 years (yes, for 28 years). And for many years I was a volunteer art docent at the Pacific Asia Museum. There were also other times with other organizations. I loved having these unpaid jobs.

They made me feel useful in my retirement. Plus, they were fun. By the way, did you know that the 2024 value of a volunteer in the US was an average of \$34.79 an hour? The amount varies by state. California has the highest rate at \$40.14. Isn't that amazing?

I work with another volunteer in the Friends of the Library bookstore every Tuesday afternoon. We help find books for our customers, help them at times, and of course sell books. The prices are very reasonable: from 50 cents for some children's books, to \$6 for as-new recent releases. Most books cost \$2-\$3.

One of the reasons our bookstore is so popular and has many repeat customers, is that it is well organized. The Children's Section is the largest. It's fun to see some of the titles that I read to my own children, my grandchildren, and now my great-grandchildren.

Dr. Seuss is still popular, as are classics such as Heidi and Charlotte's Web. Fiction sells well, and mysteries, suspense, and thrillers fly off the shelf. We have a wide range of cookbooks, which sell well.

This seems to not agree with the statistic of people eating out one third of their meals. But people like to read cookbooks for fun, and so do I.

We still have a category called Humor, although public libraries abandoned that category long ago. I don't know why, but I loved that section—don't we all need more laughs?

Some titles are rather esoteric: will anyone buy Geriatrics & Gerontology of the Dog and Cat?



Hm, boring as the title sounds, I might look at it; my cat and dog are getting on in years.

We also have a glass cabinet that holds limited editions and other valuable and fragile books.

Like most retail stores, we have "specials." During the summer, all children's books are half price, and at other times cookbooks, biographies, and other genres are featured. Jigsaw puzzles, which sell for \$2, are very popular.

We decorate our store according to the seasons. To make people read on the spot, we have a few comfortable armchairs available. All our proceeds go to special library programs. A couple of months ago, we handed the library a check for \$70,000.

However, things are looking up in Los Gatos. A tiny bookstore appeared on our main shopping street, and last week Barnes & Nobles again opened a small branch. But nothing can beat our prices, service and free parking.

# Greg Lee Tells What It's Like Going Back to School after 14 Years of Retirement

By Greg Lee

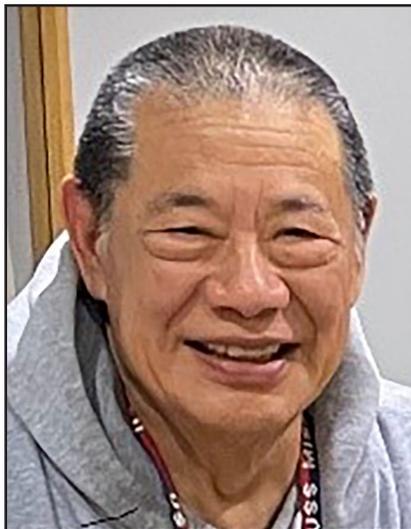
Like many teachers, I often urged my students to become lifelong learners. My parents taught me to read. They reinforced it by frequent trips to the public library, and buying three sets of presence books.

My daily after school routine included chores, homework, and to read a reference book article. After dinner, my mother would sit with me and quiz me. This formed my persistent lifelong reading habit. Many of these articles shaped my core values. The realization hit me three years ago.

My niece got accepted to a university and came to celebrate. Over dinner, she said, "Uncle, you've always told us that learning is lifelong. When are you going back to school?" I'm guessing she reveled at the "deer in the headlights" expression on my face. She and her older sister laughed, saying, "Don't worry, we found the perfect online MA program for you!"

They knew Mark Hayden helped me get my amateur radio license, and they knew I helped him with his Glendora Emergency Response Communication (GERC) group before I retired and moved overseas.

I continued helping Mark and integrated his methods with my new radio skills with my geographic knowledge to implement emergency programs in my local Thai village. These experiences led to invitations to share my experiences at three international amateur radio



**Greg called himself a pre-digital dinosaur. He said going back to school in the digital age required a new work station.**

conferences (India in 2000 & 2017, and Malaysia, 2012).

My nieces taught me how to navigate the online school procedures and techniques. However, being a pre-digital dinosaur, I wasn't comfortable with it all until the last two of the 15 classes. I took three years to complete them due to interruptions from prior long-term family health care commitments.

Now, I have an MA in Emergency and Disaster Management awarded on (no joke), April, Fool's day 2025!

The key take aways for me:

I am now more wary of what I say to young people because my words might come back to bite me.

I now have more credibility when I tell others learning is lifelong. I have a new diploma to prove I walk the talk.

As many of us know, teaching by example is an effective, time-tested teaching method

I am living proof you can teach an old dog (my Chinese birth animal) new tricks.

My hat goes off to my nieces for three years of cognitive cranial activity that I hope will be dementia and Alzheimer's prophylaxes. I'm sure there are less expensive therapies.

The new degree bolsters my standing in my emergency preparedness activities and lends more weight to the local communities voices when dealing with officials. Three cheers for lifelong learning and to communities working in emergency preparedness!

**If you haven't been to the PCC campus in a while, you will be surprised to see how the Mirror Pools have changed. A major renovation of the pools that have been a part of the campus since 1937 was recently completed. It has made the iconic pools more user friendly. Students who want to relax by the pools have plenty of places to sit with umbrellas to keep them cool.**



# Judy Benson Shares Stories About Her 120-Year Old Maternal Grandmother

By Judy Benson

When I attended a family reunion in Dunnellon, Florida with my brother, sister and Southern California cousins about 30 years ago, I had no idea we would find out we had a grandmother who lived to be 120 years old.



Judy Benson

When we arrived, we received a warm family welcome from immediate and extended relatives we had never seen before. There were great conversations, lots of hugs and fellowship.

Meet and greet get-togethers were a mix of greetings and many questions. Being the only “Judy” in attendance, people wanted to know who I was named after. That’s when I found out about Grandmother Judie Reynolds Dean, my sixth-generation, maternal grandmother and my oldest known family ancestor. It was the first time I learned about Grandmother Judie.

Grandmother Judie was born in 1805 to enslaved parents on the Dean plantation in Greenwood, South Carolina where she was a house servant for many years. She learned to read and write. She outlived two husbands and had 10 children and a host of grandchildren, great grandchildren and great-great grandchildren.



Her first husband, Hamp Reynolds, died before the Civil War. Her second husband was Elias Dean.

After the Emancipation Proclamation, Grandmother Judie left the Dean Plantation. She continued to live in South Carolina until she moved in 1906. She moved to live with her great grandson Charles Williams in Wilkesburg, Pennsylvania. Her family lived in several states throughout the United States.

She never told her children or relatives what she believed to be the cause of her long life. She never used tobacco in any form (I don’t either), but she often had a “hot toddy”. A hot toddy is an ancestral drink composed of honey, lemon, ginger, and southern distilled whiskey. We don’t know what ingredients Grandmother Judie used, but they seem to have worked to her benefit.

Upon her passing in Pittsburgh in



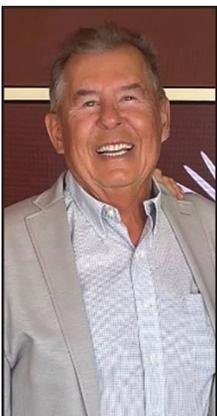
1925, she was 120 years old. Asthma was listed as the cause of death on her death certificate. Four of her children were living at the time of her death, 20 grandchildren, 69 great grandchild

Confirmed through genealogical research by my cousin Greg Bullock, who helped me write this article, there were at least 1500 living descendants as of 2025. A 2024 Judie Reynolds Dean reunion celebrated the life of Grandmother Judie with a headstone dedication in Monongahela Cemetery in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania where she is buried.

A DNA genealogy search of my African heritage traced Grandmother Judie’s roots to the Fulani tribe in both Northeast and Western Africa (Nigeria). It is an honor to share a part of Grandmother Judie’s legacy from Africa to America.

I will always carry with pride the name, Judy and the legacy of Judie Reynolds

## Dan Meier Appointed To Serve on the Retirees Association Board



I spent a wonderful 34 years at Pasadena City College teaching both English and English as a Second Language.

Also, during my tenure at PCC, I served as a faculty advisor for several student clubs, with my favorite being the International Club, the inspiration for my learning Mandarin Chinese.

After I retired in 2015, I found Pickleball! As both a sport and social club, this activity consumes most of my waking hours (those who play will relate).

I look forward, however, to serving as a member of PCC’s Retirees Association Board as well as playing pickleball on the college’s new pickleball courts!





# Retirees Just Like To Have Fun!

Every year, the Retirees Board plans events and get-togethers for members. Two mixers a year bring out a lot of retirees who enjoy spending an afternoon visiting with friends and colleagues.

In 2025, retirees enjoyed celebrating Halloween and the holidays at two mixers. In addition, quite a few retirees enjoyed a late afternoon visit to El Torito. Drinks, chips and conversation made for a fun get together.

This year started off with a trip to Santa Anita for early morning workouts. It was definitely early in

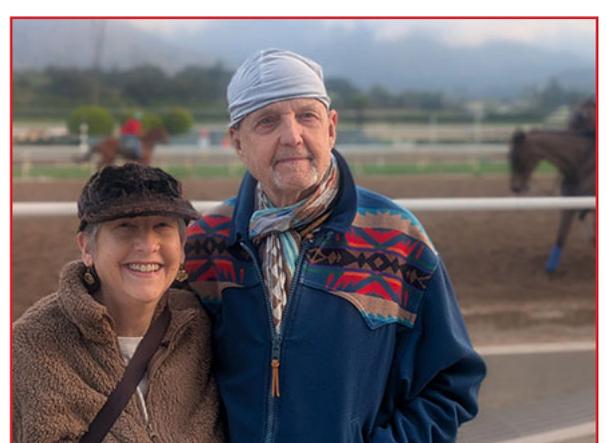
the morning when people arrived to watch the horses run and have breakfast at Clockers Corner. How early? Everyone met at 6 a.m. Those who are early birds said they really enjoyed the outing. Those who prefer to sleep later passed on that one. Don't worry, most events planned by the Board are usually in the late afternoon.

If you haven't shared your email with the retirees group yet, please do so. Several times, we have had a chance to attend some last-minute activities, and we can only notify members by email.

Normally, you will get a postcard with plenty of time to sign up.

Rob Lee, Retirees Association President, is our official photographer. He shoots all of the group's activities. He usually takes a lot more pictures than we have room for in the newsletter, so we are in the process of putting photos online on the retirees web page at Pasadena.edu/retirees.

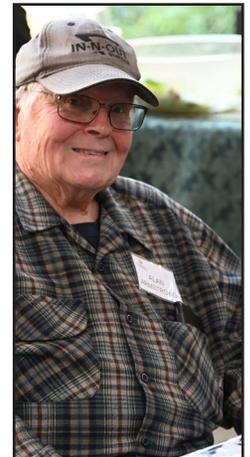
If you don't see your photo, check out the website for all of the pictures of our event. The photos should be up there soon.

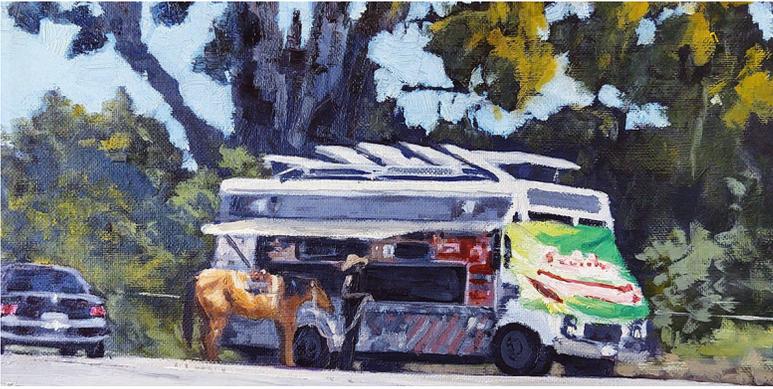


# Retirees Association Gets 25 New Members

Name	Title	Department	Years of Service
Stanley Baden	Assistant Professor	Visual Arts and Media Studies	26
Anthony Brown	Accountant	Fiscal Services	19
Cara Burris-Jones	Professor	Natural Sciences	23
Carol Curtis	Professor	English and Language Studies	30
Alan De La Vara	Specialist, High School Relations and College Orientation	Matriculation /Outreach	17
Early Douglas	Professor	Career and Technical Education	40
Martha Granados	Cosmetology Technical Assistant	Career and Technical Education	29
Kevin Hackworth	Gardner	Facilities and Construction Services	17
Kathleen Hogue	Professor	Mathematics	37
Susie Ling	Associate Professor	Social Sciences	38
Alicia Martinez	Administrative Assistant II	Social Sciences	27
Heather Meier	Clergy Records and Training Specialist	Campus Police and College Safety	16
Marina Minasian	Controller	Fiscal Services	8
Bill Moore	Associate Professor	Kinesiology, Health and Athletics	28
Denise Olive	Accounting Technician	Fiscal Services	32
Mark Sakata	Teacher Specialist/Professor	Lancer Accessibility Resource Services	20
Roberto Sanchez	Custodian	Facilities and Construction Services	18
Grace Scharler	Administrative Assistant I	Financial Aid	18
Stephanie Schmidt	Professor	Health Sciences	23
Jude Socrates	Professor	Mathematics	33
Cheryl Storms	Executive Assistant	Student Services	22
Brian Tucker	Associate Professor	Visual Arts and Media Studies	20
Paul Valdez	Buyer	Purchasing	24
Paula Vento	Assistant Professor	Health Sciences	14
Sharon Whatley	Accounting Technician	Fiscal Services	19

The PCC Retirees Association gets new members every time staff members retire from the college. You become a member of the association as soon as you make your retirement official. There are no dues or papers to fill out. Just having worked at the college and retired is all that is needed to become a member. We look forward to seeing the 25 new retirees at some of our events.





## Barbara Freund Returns To Painting Outdoors

By Barbara Freund

First, I hope all of you affected by the fires are finding support and healing with the help of family, friends, and communities.

Since retiring I have returned to painting. I love to be outdoors, painting on site (en plein air). I am inspired by



the beautiful California landscapes and the ways in which certain aspects of them spark a memory or mood which speaks to me. I paint not only for myself but also for the viewer by hopefully creating a dialogue of shared experiences with each painting.

I also paint to give back where I can by donating a portion of proceeds to local rescue groups. I have exhibited in both group and solo venues, including the Santa Monica Mountains Anthony Beileson Inter-agency Visitor Center, La Galleria Gitana, Malibu City Hall, Santa Paula Art Museum, and Topanga Canyon Gallery.

I also exhibited at the Slopoke Western Art Exhibit and won the Southwest Art magazine-sponsored award for "Best Art Depicting Today's American West." The painting depicted a food truck that is routinely seen at Malibu Canyon Rd and Mulholland Rd in Calabasas. While I was painting the scene, a woman rode up on a horse and placed an order (I don't know what the horse

ordered, lol). Of course I had to include them! The painting was entitled, what else, "21st Century Chuckwagon."

This year I was honored to be among a handful of artists juried to participate in the annual Carmel Plein Air Art Festival. A week in Carmel painting beautiful landscapes and beach scape, not enough time!

I am currently serving as President of the Allied Artists of the Santa Monica Mountains and Seashore.

It is a group of local fine artists with a long history of painting representational art of the Santa Monica Mountains and beaches to promote appreciation of the environment and to support conservation and maintenance in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The group hosts an annual exhibit and sale every spring at King Gillette Ranch. I would love to see some of you at this, or any of the local shows.

If you like, you can see my work at [www.barbarafreund.com](http://www.barbarafreund.com) and/or follow on instagram @ravencliffstudio.

## Retirees Association Gives Thousands of Scholarships Each Year

Every year the PCC Retirees Association distributes scholarship awards (\$2500 this year) to qualified students. We are especially interested in returning students who have faced serious challenges in their lives before enrolling at the College. Some have faced homelessness, drug and alcohol addiction, family or spousal abuses, and some have even been incarcerated for a several years. Last year we awarded 11 students and hope to award a like number this spring. The students selected for awards will be honored at our awards luncheon in May at the Pasadena University Club.

To be able to award so many students, we always need donations. We are most fortunate that several of our retirees contribute \$2500 to cover the cost of one scholarship. But all donations are most welcome.

To contribute, you can send a check to the PCC Foundation (1324 E. Green St., Pasadena 91106) or you can donate online at: <https://10933.thankyou4caring.org>. Please designate the PCC Retirees Scholarship Fund for your donation. If you have any questions about donations, please call Amy Carnes at 626-585-7113.

Many thanks for your help. PCC Scholarship Committee: Alan Lamson, Mikki Bolliger, Cynthia George, Rob Lee, Dona Mitoma, and Jan Sutherland

# In Memoriam

## Ginny Herringer Loved Hiking

Early on Sunday morning, Dec. 15, after three years of succumbing to dementia, Ginny Herringer passed away. A long time Pasadena resident, she was an active community member who will be deeply missed by many.

Ginny was born in Richland, Washington and grew up in Bermuda, Montreal and New York due to her father Carl's work as a U.S. immigration officer. She met her husband Jim Herringer at the Ohio State University where they both studied linguistics, and she received one of the first master's degrees in the newly founded Applied Linguistics department in 1969. Jim and Ginny were married in Ohio in 1968.

The couple moved to Los Angeles in 1973 where she began teaching English as a Second Language at the American Language Institute and the University of Southern California. They moved to Pasadena in 1976, and she began teaching at Pasadena City College in 1985 where she worked as a professor and coordinator of the ESL program until her retirement in 2011. Through the Pasadena Sister Cities program, she visited Beijing several times as an educational consultant in exchange with Chinese librarians whom she also hosted at PCC. In 2005, her book "Reading and Researching America" was published by Michigan University Press and was based on her own approach to teaching writing to university students with authentic, primary sources that reflected diverse perspectives of early

U.S. history.

In addition to her teaching work, Ginny had a lifelong love of the outdoors and was an avid hiker, naturalist and birder. She led hikes for the Sierra Club, acted as Pasadena Group Chair for many years, and was a member of the Hundred Peaks Section, bagging all 275 peaks in Southern California over 5,000 feet. Ginny's immediate family—her husband Jim, her children Annie and Mike, her children in-law Christian and Cindy and her grandchildren Louis, Alexis and Addison miss her very much.



## Marilyn Porter, International Students



Marilyn Porter passed away on Sept 10, 2025 at the age of 89. She worked at PCC from the mid 1970s to September 2001 as a Senior Clerk in the International Student's Office. She liked working at PCC and enjoyed her job. She served as a chaperone a few times when groups of International Students took field trips to places like Yosemite National Park. Marilyn especially liked to dress up for Halloween and would go all out with the costumes she wore to work. Marilyn helped to plan several of the Student Services Christmas parties. She also served on the planning committee for the first Classified Employees Recognition Day.

Marilyn loved to do crafts—silk flower arrangements and boutique items. She would do her crafts and sew items to sell in various boutiques.

She is survived by her two sons, Jeffrey and Scott, her daughters in law, Betsey and Karla, six grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

## Diana Shoeman Technician at PCC



Diana was born in Illinois and moved in 1948 to Southern California where she graduated high school in 1961 and married Arnie in 1962. They started a family in 1963, and had three children Kim, Rachel and Michael. Diana loved her job at the college, and she worked there for 23 years as a technician.

She loved and trusted her Savior Jesus Christ in all circumstances. In January of 2016, she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer.

After a valiant fight, the Lord called her to Paradise. Her attitude was positive, her humor big and her faith strong—all the way to the end.

Diana is survived by her husband Arnie, her children, grandchildren and many family members.

## John Rahm Taught in the Art Division

**John Rahm, an assistant professor of art, passed away in May 2024. He retired in 1993 after working 34 years in the art division. He was 93 years old.**



# Jacqui Smith Loved Cooking Her Whole Life; She Helped Establish PCC's Culinary Arts Program

Jacqueline was born in New York to John and Jesse Taylor on February 5, 1937. She was their only child. Later, she had two younger brothers, John and Phillip Penalver. She married Ronald Smith in 1958 and they had two sons, Markena Xolani (Mark Smith) and Kyle Smith.

Markena shared that he and his brother ate well their whole lives. Markena's favorite dishes were his mom's lasagna and coq au vin. She also made delicious meatloaf, pot roast, stuffed chicken breast and the list goes on and on. She loved baking and graciously shared her desserts with family, friends and neighbors. When she baked bread, the fragrance permeated the whole neighborhood.

In New York, she taught ballet in her home. She trained at the Arthur Mitchell Dance Theater of Harlem.

When she first moved to California with her family, they lived in West Los Angeles. She worked in a manufacturing firm and then at First Interstate Bank (now Wells Fargo Bank). Sometime later, she started her own catering business. She catered for Good Sam's Club when the members, about 1,500, would park their RVs in the PCC parking lot on

New Year's Eve. She prepared dinner for Los Angeles Children's Hospital when they had a special event at the equestrian center in Glendale. This was her largest catering event serving 2,500 attendees. She catered lots of weddings, community and corporate events. She served food at Steven Spielberg's Cinematic Arts School at USC. Her students would often get on-the-job training at some of her events.

Jacqui got her formal culinary training at Culinary Arts Institute in Hyde Park, NY and Johnson & Wales University in Providence, Rhode Island. She got her associate in arts degree from PCC.



In July, 1974 Jacqui and family moved to their home in Altadena. Unfortunately, this home was burned in the Eaton Canyon fire in 2025 along with her African art, hundreds of cookbooks and magazines, piano, photos and many precious family treasures. Her son, Markena, was only able to leave with legal documents and his dog Falon. Fortunately, this family home is being rebuilt and should be ready this Spring.

Chef Jacqui started teaching part time at Pasadena City College and was instrumental in creating the culinary arts program. She retired in 2011 after teaching full time for eight years. She loved traveling. She traveled to Australia, Switzerland, Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy and Denmark to name a few places. She also did an international food tour with other chefs.

Later in life, around 2014, Jacqui married Arne Jacobson-Rafn who was from Denmark. That's when Denmark became her home. After his passing, she returned to California. Jacqui died on February 14, 2023. She was intelligent, adventurous, passionate, spiritual, kind, generous and gracious. She always had a beautiful smile and a kind word to share.

## Coleen Brennan

The San Gabriel Valley always played a role in the life of Colleen Brennan. She was born in Pasadena in 1932 and often told people that it snowed in the city that day. She grew up in Highland Park, graduated from South Pasadena-San Marino High School, worked at Flintridge China in Pasadena and lived in Glendora and Alhambra before settling in Arcadia. She was also a homemaker and worked at the Los Angeles Times before beginning a career and retiring from Pasadena City College.

In 2010, Colleen sold her Arcadia home and moved to Arcadia Gardens Retirement Hotel, where she lived the rest of her life. She enjoyed her family, son Bob (a PCC graduate) and daughter-in-law Mary Alice and their cats, whom she would often cat sit. She also enjoyed friends, meeting new people, watching sports and keeping up with and discussing the news.

An enthusiastic newspaper reader, Colleen had subscriptions to the Pasadena Star News and the Los Angeles Times.

Colleen always said she wanted to live to be 100 years old. She passed away on August 30, 2025, celebrating 93 and  $\frac{3}{4}$  years of age.



## Neomi King, Admissions

Neomi King was born in Texas, and she loved the yellow rose of Texas. It's also why she was so hospitable: she never did anything halfway. She went big or she didn't go at all. She grew up in East Los Angeles and went to Garfield High School. She was tiny, but she was tough. She was not a woman who could be bullied. She was no shrinking violet. Being number 9 of 10 children, she was not going to let anyone pass over her. She had a wonderful bond with her grandchildren.

Her sister says she was a caring person—consistently loyal and steadfast. She was loyal to her friends and family, and her loyalty to her Lord was beyond compare. She and her sister Rosie were the family prayer warriors.

Neomi worked nine years in Admissions and Records.

